

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

August 18, 2016

*Sharon Hill Court Reporting
4021 Robinwood Cr.
Bryant, AR 72022
(501) 847-0510*

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

AUGUST 18, 2016
8:30 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	Chairman/Chief of Staff
DR. MARK GOTCHER	Vice Chair/Deputy Commissioner
MS. IVY PFEFFER	Asst. Commissioner - HR/Educator Effectiveness & Licensure
DR. ERIC SAUNDERS	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Administrative Services
MS. ANNETTE BARNES	Asst. Commission - Public School Accountability
MR. GREG ROGERS	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Admin. Services
MS. JENNIFER LIWO	PLSB Attorney
MR. BOBBY LESTER	Director of Federal Programs
MS. STACY SMITH	Interim Asst. Commissioner of Learning Services

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. ALEXANDRA BOYD	Public School Program Coordinator
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	Public School Program Advisor

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO	ADE General Counsel
MS. JENNIFER DAVIS	ADE Deputy General Counsel

Arkansas Department of Education
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

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E X H I B I T S

A-1: PARON CHARTER SCHOOL

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

Saline County Assessor Geographic Information Systems
Map - Bryant School District

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Good morning. We'll call the August 18, 2016 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel to order. We welcome everyone to the Department and ask that you please silence all electronic devices.

The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision and revocation of charters. The Arkansas Quality Charter Schools Act of 2013 required the Commissioner to appoint an ADE staff to the panel, and the panel sits before you today. It is our goal to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing.

I will request that each person speaking speak clearly into the microphone. Please state your name and title for the record. I will ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the Panel, the audience, and the viewing audience. The meeting today is being livestreamed and recorded; it will be posted on the ADE website. And Ms. Sharon Hill, our court reporter, is here today and she will be providing a transcript of this meeting that will also be posted on the ADE website.

A-1: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
APPLICATION: PARON CHARTER SCHOOL, PARON, ARKANSAS

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So we'll move directly
2 into action item one (1). Ms. Boyd, you're
3 recognized.

4 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. This morning
5 you'll be hearing a proposal for an open-enrollment
6 charter school in Paron, Arkansas. Before we get
7 started would you like to be reminded of the hearing
8 procedures?

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, we would.

10 MS. BOYD: All right. Thank you. We'll have
11 Jennifer Davis to give those.

12 MS. DAVIS: Hi, good morning. Jennifer Davis,
13 Staff Attorney for the Department. The procedures
14 you're going to follow this morning will be that all
15 persons with the exception of attorneys will need to
16 be sworn in. The open-enrollment applicant will have
17 20 minutes to present its case to the -- to the
18 authorizer.

19 Is that better?

20 Parties opposed will also have 20 minutes, and
21 then the applicant will have 5 minutes additional to
22 respond. At that time you may ask questions of the
23 applicant or anyone else that you may have questions
24 of. You may make your final decision today or take
25 it under advisement for a future meeting. If you

1 make your decision today, you do have a Google doc
2 that you will need to record your reason for your
3 vote. Do you have any questions?

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: No questions. And do we
5 have someone that will join us by phone?

6 MS. HELTON: Yes, we have one; his name is
7 Bryce.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

9 MS. DAVIS: And one last thing, just a reminder
10 that this is a charter so it is really a contract
11 negotiation. So anything that the applicant may
12 agree to that differs from their written materials
13 that have been submitted will become part of any
14 charter that you do grant.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Teal, do you want to test
16 microphone one to see if it works?

17 MS. HELTON: Test.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Ms. Boyd, you're
19 recognized.

20 MS. BOYD: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 For the Paron Charter School, the first person
22 to speak to you will be Jamie Mullins.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I'll ask that everyone
24 that is representing Paron Charter School or anyone
25 speaking in opposition, if you'll please stand and

1 raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that
2 the testimony you're about to give shall be the
3 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

4 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Ms. Mullins,
6 if you'll state your name and title.

7 MS. MULLINS: Good morning. My name is Jamie
8 Mullins. I am one of the founding trustees for the
9 Paron Community Trust, which is the sponsoring entity
10 for the charter. I'm also the office manager of the
11 Paron Owensville Water Authority and was on the
12 founding group of getting water to the northwest part
13 of Saline County. I'm committed to the Paron
14 community.

15 I'm also here, as are the others, to represent
16 the parents and the children of Paron. It was 10
17 years ago that the upper grades were bused out of
18 Paron. It has been now 8 years that we have been a
19 community trust, and the purpose in that was to help
20 hold the community together to provide community
21 support and education within the community. During
22 that time we have developed a library in the old high
23 school building; we have a partnership with the
24 Saline County Library System; we provide internet
25 accessibility in an area of the county that has

1 difficulties both either economically or logistically
2 in getting internet service. We worked with Dr.
3 Richard Abernathy to create the 99-year lease on the
4 buildings that we had. And then last spring when the
5 school was closed Dr. Kimbrell was -- kindly asked us
6 if we were interested in a charter at the time. But
7 because of the chaos going in it was difficult for
8 anybody to really focus on putting in the time with a
9 charter because they were worried about where their
10 children were going the next year. After the dust
11 settled we then started looking at -- and community
12 members came forward and said, "What do we do? What
13 does that mean? How do we go about it?" So that's
14 how we started on the path for the charter.

15 I asked that you receive the maps that are there
16 to kind of give an idea on the large area that is --
17 was the Paron School District, that was the Paron
18 elementary district, and how it became quite unwieldy
19 for the Bryant School District to maintain us. And
20 you can also see the expansive area and the
21 difficulty for negotiating parent involvement when
22 you have that kind of area and you're sending
23 children out of that area, bringing them back into
24 the area, parents that live outside of the area. It
25 makes for difficulty in providing that family

1 commitment to the children's education and
2 activities.

3 I am here with Candy Webb, who is our 4H leader;
4 actually, the 2015 Leader of the Year for Saline
5 County. And she is our connection with the U of A
6 and the Extension Service to bring the outdoor
7 activities and a lot of the programs that they
8 provide by specialists and professionals within the U
9 of A system. I'm going to let her --

10 MS. WEBB: Good morning. My name is Candy Webb;
11 as she stated, I'm the 4H leader for our area. Our
12 program in Paron focuses on outdoor classroom,
13 wildlife habitat education program, forestry, and we
14 work closely with our forestry department in
15 Arkansas, both the U of A specialists and also the
16 businesses around us that deal with forestry -- a big
17 deal in our area. We also work with the Game and
18 Fish Commission for outdoor classroom activities and
19 tools. We focus on culinary skills and nutrition in
20 our area. Also, we have a pre-vet science program
21 for kids that are under the age of 14. All of those
22 things are provided through U of A at no cost to our
23 community or our members. Given that 4H is really
24 geared toward young minds that are learning, programs
25 are geared toward specific age groups. It should be

1 fairly a smooth transition for us to bring those
2 programs into the classroom. U of A already does
3 that on a large scale in Benton and Bryant. They
4 already go into the classrooms and focus on the
5 programs that they offer through U of A. So with my
6 connection already, our community's connection
7 already, we plan to bring those programs onto campus
8 with our extension service agents, professionals, and
9 specialists already in Little Rock, Fayetteville,
10 Pine Bluff. Those folks have already committed time
11 to our kids, even without the charter school, and are
12 very open to providing those programs on campus as we
13 can offer them.

14 4H is a big deal for my family; it's a big deal
15 in our community, and we're a small community but
16 it's not just about livestock and animals. There's a
17 lot of STEM activities that happen through 4H and a
18 lot of those programs are geared specifically towards
19 rocketry, robotics, computer programming -- and while
20 those are not areas that I deal with, I have friends,
21 volunteers, staff personnel that focus directly on --
22 in those STEM areas and they are very willing to
23 bring those programs to Paron. So with that
24 curriculum, with that support already in place, we
25 look forward to being able to provide those to our

1 kids on a much larger scale. That program has
2 already proven to be effective in so many areas,
3 small towns and urban areas alike. We hope that we
4 are able to provide that in our classrooms on a
5 regular basis.

6 And Candace Williams with the RCA group, do you
7 want to come on up?

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I'm just here to
9 offer the support from Rural Community Alliance. As
10 Jamie stated, over 10 years ago the district was
11 consolidated. So the communities that we work in are
12 just like Paron, communities that have gone through
13 school consolidation. And I'm just very proud and
14 honored to be here to show our support to the Paron
15 Community Trust as they're pursuing this, because, as
16 Jamie stated, this is very organic; this is coming
17 from their community. So I would encourage our other
18 communities that we're working to take this same
19 route after a traditional public school has -- is no
20 longer there in their community to pursue something
21 as this. So just here to offer support from Rural
22 Community Alliance. And in the application, the
23 president of the board, Lavina Grandon, submitted a
24 letter of support.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Would you state your name

1 and title for the record?

2 MS. WILLIAMS: Candace Williams, executive
3 director of Rural Community Alliance.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

5 STATE REPRESENTATIVE GATES: Good morning. My
6 name is Mickey Gates; I'm State Representative in
7 District 22. The northern part of my district is the
8 Paron district. And I will tell you one of the
9 things when you're out knocking on doors and trying
10 to find people, sometimes it takes 20 or 30 minutes
11 just to get to their house. And so a lot of times
12 when we start looking at how long we're putting kids
13 on the bus you've got to realize oftentimes those
14 kids have already been away from their homes 20 or 30
15 minutes just to get to what we call Paron. And so
16 for those areas that are rural -- I live out in the
17 country and my kids were country bumpkins; we try to
18 dress up nice so we don't embarrass people. But, you
19 know, when you live in a small community and you know
20 everybody and everybody knows -- and then you go to
21 one of the largest school districts and then you've
22 taken small children and you've bussed them that
23 long, it does affect them. It doesn't just affect
24 their school life; it affects their family life. And
25 what time they -- how early -- how much earlier they

1 have to go to bed and how much earlier they have to
2 get up. And those are consequences for somebody like
3 me that had learning challenges. You know, I'm a
4 state representative and, you know, you're not
5 supposed to announce those things, but I had my
6 learning challenges. And so, you know, there's so
7 much going on. And when a community says, "We're
8 behind this and we want to do this," and it's going
9 to take extra work and -- you know -- this is parent
10 involvement to its max. I would hope the State would
11 be able to give that consideration to say this may be
12 something worth us making that investment in those
13 kids and giving them a shot at bringing those kids
14 back home and bringing them to a local place where
15 they know everybody and everybody knows them, and not
16 lose the sense of community. Because there's -- when
17 I go to Paron there's normally only two things that
18 brings that community together: one is the volunteer
19 fire department and the other is our school. And I
20 would appreciate y'all's consideration. I think it
21 would be worthwhile for the state to do this. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

24 MS. MULLINS: While we're aware that there are
25 multiple reasons for our request and we're aware that

1 our presentation, our application is probably not as
2 polished as you would hope for, we're not a big box
3 educational group; we are a group of citizens of a
4 community that are trying to provide an education and
5 opportunities for our kids close to home so that we
6 can participate in them. We have -- we're not happy
7 that our school closed, but it did afford us the
8 opportunity to reboot and to relook at what we can
9 now make available within the community. Being able
10 to utilize the U of A and the 4H programs and the
11 support from the Extension Office, as well as
12 utilizing internet courses to be able to provide
13 nearly limitless programs, we feel like it is the
14 future; it is the best opportunity we can provide
15 these kids close to home. There are classroom
16 settings through the internet. It is our plan for
17 each child to have -- be one-on-one with at least a
18 tablet in year-one. There will be a computer lab
19 that will provide enough computers for each setting.
20 Not all children will be in the lab at the same time,
21 but we will have computers available to them.

22 The support of the Community Trust is going to
23 be necessary for us to be viable. We know that we're
24 talking about small numbers to get started. The
25 community, while they support this, we'd be lying if

1 we didn't tell you that we've lost people in the
2 community because the school moved. We have
3 supported -- the Community Trust has supported the
4 Head Start that is across the street from the school
5 and we have little kids coming out of there each year
6 and we don't want to send any more of those five- and
7 six-year olds on a bus outside their home community.
8 And that's why we started with the K through 5. We
9 figured those are going to be the easiest for us to
10 catch. By the time you have students that have
11 gotten into the upper grades, they've already
12 established relationships; they have established
13 themselves in another school. And we're not trying
14 to pull those necessarily back; we're trying to
15 capture the ones who haven't gone. And adding a year
16 each year we can then begin to look at having the
17 next graduating class at Paron High School -- Paron
18 Charter School.

19 I know that there are questions or going to be
20 questions on our budget. It is minimal at best. We
21 have been in contact with Kathy Smith with the Walton
22 Family Foundation. As all of you, I know, are well
23 aware, without approval they don't guarantee funds.
24 We have been in communication with APSRC and will be
25 joining them to provide us with the guidance so that

1 we are in compliance. We have yet a lot to put
2 together. Our goal was to provide a program to look
3 and see what we could make available, and through the
4 internet courses -- at this point we have looked at
5 Connections Learning. But we are quite aware that
6 we're going to have to do the bid process on that and
7 get proposals, so they obviously are not set in
8 stone. I believe we have somebody online that can
9 speak to what is available through Connections
10 Learning and would be happy to let them provide any
11 information they would like to. I don't know how you
12 -- how we request that. Are they there?

13 MS. HELTON: Excuse me; are you there? Let me
14 step out.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

16 MR. McCRAY: Hi.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Good morning. If you'll
18 state your name for the record?

19 MR. McCRAY: Sure. My name is T.J. McCray and
20 I'm the assistant director of School Support with
21 Connections Learning.

22 MS. HELTON: Can you repeat that?

23 MR. McCRAY: Sure. My name is T.J. McCray and I
24 am the assistant director of School Support.

25 MS. MULLINS: Mr. McCray, could you explain or

1 provide the information to them concerning what you
2 would be able to provide us for the K through 5?

3 MR. McCRAY: Sure. Here at Connections Learning
4 we provide individualized education for our clients.
5 We provide K through 5; we provide a number of
6 different options that we have available. Those
7 options include a teacher, curriculum, our
8 Blackboard, our educational -- we call it educational
9 management system which houses everything that the
10 students will need, almost like a one-stop-shop where
11 students will log on daily to complete their work,
12 have communication and to interact with their actual
13 online teacher. There are textbooks. Any type of
14 extra information that they will need, everything is
15 housed inside of this educational management system.
16 This is also included with us. We also provide
17 support for the district to assist with understanding
18 what students are doing on a daily basis, providing
19 grade reports where they can monitor student
20 achievement. And that's pretty much it.

21 MS. MULLINS: We anticipate not only utilizing
22 their teacher training but also through APSRC and
23 ADE's mentoring programs for any of our staff. We
24 would like to look -- I know saying that we want new
25 teachers is probably not the goal of most schools,

1 but we're anxious to have the enthusiasm, the
2 openness to developing what we see as the promise for
3 the Paron Charter School. And to have new minds that
4 are ready to put what they've learned into action
5 with the training and the professional development,
6 it just seems like a win situation for us.

7 All rightee. I guess it's now time for you to
8 take the rest of it.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Is there
10 anyone here to speak in opposition?

11 MS. BOYD: No, ma'am.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: You have two minutes
13 remaining, plus five additional minutes, if you'd
14 like to take those, Ms. Mullins.

15 MS. MULLINS: I'll just come up here and say no,
16 thank you; I'll reserve that and let you ask the
17 questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Saunders.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: Good morning.

20 MS. MULLINS: Good morning.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. So as I'm looking at this
22 and I'm viewing it, I'm trying to understand. If I
23 heard you correctly, some of the concerns that you
24 have dealing with the shutting down of the school
25 located there in Paron, students riding on the bus

1 for excessive amounts of time as a result of that,
2 and community impact as well. Is that a fair
3 summary?

4 MS. MULLINS: In part. It is part of the whole
5 picture. I mean, I have a grandson that currently is
6 bussed out of the area and he feels stressed by it.
7 All he knew, he went his beginning years at Paron and
8 was nearly across the street from the school. So
9 going a great distance is problematic for him. Kids
10 adjust. But the problem is when you have parents
11 that work in Little Rock, live in Paron and say go to
12 Perryville, or even if it's Bryant, I mean, you're
13 still zigzagging. Again, the reason for the map, you
14 see that there is a vast area there. And if you're
15 talking about afterschool activities or programs or
16 even assemblies it's difficult for parents to
17 participate, and for us parent participation is
18 really important. One of the big activities in Paron
19 is hunting but during deer season we would typically
20 have DEAR camp, d-e-a-r, Drop Everything and Read.
21 And we would bring the community together and they'd
22 have campfires and all sorts of people in the
23 community came in and read with the kids and it was
24 interaction. You had multigenerational activities.
25 And if you're all spaced out you don't get an

1 opportunity to have that. So, yes, bussing is part
2 of it but not the prime reason to be concerned of the
3 large area. I mean, it's just a matter of for 60
4 years there was a community school; there was an
5 autonomous community school that never was in fiscal
6 or academic distress. And although we don't want to
7 go back to what it was, we want to have that
8 opportunity, that independence to be able to provide
9 an education for the future for the kids. We look at
10 it as although they're going to get practical
11 experience -- some kids won't go to college, but the
12 ones that do, if they receive that practical
13 experience within their high school years, they have
14 a way to earn money while they're at college so that
15 they can get through college.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Have you considered the
17 possibility -- I know that you were discussing the
18 online learning.

19 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: I commend you for thinking, you
21 know, a little different, see what's available to do
22 that. Have you considered the possibility of, say, a
23 community effort or collaboration that would allow
24 those students within that area to enroll in one of
25 the online providers that already exist and

1 coordinate those efforts without the separate
2 establishment of an LEA and the rules and
3 requirements thereof?

4 MS. MULLINS: Yes, we have looked at that
5 possibility. Because one of the goals in -- when we
6 worked out the transfer of the campus from the Bryant
7 School District, our goal was to have a learning
8 center there, regardless of how you look at what it
9 was, whether it was just adult learning, whether it
10 was 4H projects. I mean, we've had the culinary
11 folks out. We have a lot of the programs out there.
12 We have looked at that as a possibility, but for some
13 parents it was not as comfortable to them as to have
14 an actual school that they could rely on. There was
15 -- they looked at it as like homeschooling and they
16 wanted to -- they liked the idea of the school. I
17 mean, that may be old-school but that was being able
18 to combine what they knew, and those learning
19 experiences on the internet seemed to be a better
20 idea. It is again though our plan to utilize
21 afterschool hours, the campus, for additional
22 learning opportunities.

23 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. That's all for now.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins, how many
25 students were attending the Paron School, Paron

1 School -- Elementary School when Bryant made the
2 decision to close it?

3 MS. MULLINS: I believe it was -- it was either
4 65 or 68. I don't remember what the last number was.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: That's helpful. Ms.
6 Barnes.

7 MS. BARNES: Good morning.

8 MS. MULLINS: Good morning.

9 MS. BARNES: A quick question -- as you were
10 speaking earlier, you made mention of your grandson
11 who is experiencing some stress regarded to being
12 transported a distance away. What grade is your
13 grandson?

14 MS. MULLINS: He's in 4th grade.

15 MS. BARNES: 4th grade. So he would be a 5th
16 grader in the 17-18 school year?

17 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

18 MS. BARNES: Okay. And as you were speaking
19 earlier, you also went into that it's not the goal
20 per se to pull the students back who may be in
21 attendance at other districts currently, but to give
22 those students who are coming or entering school in
23 those early grades an opportunity to have a stable
24 foundation. I may be paraphrasing some of your
25 words. But I guess my question is: is it the intent

1 then to build the enrollment, the initial enrollment,
2 should this charter application be approved, by
3 pulling back those individual students who may
4 already be established in other schools in those K-5
5 grades who are currently enrolled? I mean, I'm just
6 asking that in order to determine how the enrollment
7 will be built.

8 MS. MULLINS: The parents and the children that
9 we're representing are ones that are going elsewhere
10 that want to be able to come back. When I say we're
11 not going to pull people back, there have been people
12 that have moved from the community in order to live
13 closer to their school and be able to participate in
14 their -- I mean, these were life-changing decisions
15 that these families had to make.

16 MS. BARNES: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. MULLINS: And without having the opportunity
18 to see something different within the community, they
19 chose to move and settle elsewhere. Those people are
20 not coming back.

21 MS. BARNES: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. MULLINS: We know that.

23 MS. BARNES: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. MULLINS: But, yes, there are -- I mean,
25 some of the buses that are leaving the community with

1 kids are so full that they're being told that there's
2 not space on the bus to get them to the school, so --
3 and a part of, I think, the problem that we've
4 experienced with some of the kids, mostly the younger
5 kids -- because when the high school closed most of
6 the kids -- a lot of the kids went to Perryville, and
7 Perryville couldn't have been more opening and
8 welcoming to those kids. It has been more difficult
9 when the elementary closed and they experienced
10 overcrowding there, and I think the teachers were
11 under some stress dealing with additional children in
12 the classroom.

13 So, I'm sorry, to go back to your question: yes,
14 the ones that have -- that still want to have a
15 school that have no choice right now but to go
16 elsewhere, yes, we anticipate them coming back.

17 MS. BARNES: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Additional questions? Ms.
19 Pfeffer.

20 MS. PFEFFER: I have a couple of questions and
21 it's partly on the budget and then the waivers. I
22 noticed that you are projecting your revenue based on
23 60 students.

24 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

25 MS. PFEFFER: And you had -- you were looking at

1 having two teachers for the first year and with the
2 planned K-5 grades. So the plan would be to have
3 those two teachers in the classes possibly combined?

4 MS. MULLINS: Plus special ed.

5 MS. PFEFFER: Plus the special ed. Okay. I was
6 just wondering -- and Legal may need to step in here
7 -- depending on the makeup of the students, would the
8 class size limits -- could that work, I guess, if you
9 were looking at 60 students but you add kindergarten
10 where a class size limit is 20 students. And so I'm
11 just wondering if that's something that needs to be
12 looked at in terms of -- I didn't see that there was
13 a waiver requested for class size.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis, can you speak
15 to that?

16 MS. DAVIS: If they do want to alter their class
17 sizes, then, yes, they would need a waiver and they
18 currently did not request one.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So more specifically to
20 Ms. Pfeffer's question, if you have 60 kids over K-5
21 there would have -- two teachers would not meet the
22 state requirement?

23 MS. DAVIS: Not currently. No. And did you ask
24 about special education?

25 MS. PFEFFER: I didn't ask about that because I

1 think there is a plan for a special education teacher

2 --

3 MS. DAVIS: Right.

4 MS. PFEFFER: -- that was in the budget. I was
5 just more -- just trying to think logistically if
6 within that scenario --

7 MR. ROGERS: I was going to ask about the
8 special ed. teacher --

9 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MR. ROGERS: -- because I see that the budget
11 only has .75 for a special ed. teacher. So I
12 wondered how that comes into play too, with student
13 size too with the federal requirements for the
14 special ed. teacher. So I don't know how .75 special
15 ed. teacher would work with a student population size
16 of 60. I don't even know if you can get -- I don't
17 even know if you can waive that.

18 MS. DAVIS: No, you can't waive that. I think
19 that's 15 students, special ed. Actually, it may be
20 less than that. I'll have to double-check. It's
21 less than that, and I think it's even less if it's in
22 a self-contained classroom. But it cannot be waived
23 --

24 MS. BARNES: Yeah.

25 MS. DAVIS: -- special education class size.

1 MS. BARNES: Preferably eight.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins, could you
3 speak to the special ed. teacher?

4 MS. MULLINS: Well, first, let me go back to the
5 question of the class size. I think that our -- and
6 it may have been our misunderstanding and our
7 additional need of guidance from APSRC, but with
8 having online classroom and children utilizing that
9 we maybe mistakenly assumed that we could count those
10 teachers as part of the plan on being able to --
11 speaking to the class size. And if I'm mistaken,
12 then we will have to obviously relook at that. On
13 the special ed., the reason for the partial was that
14 having teachers' assistants that would be paras we
15 anticipated their being partially used as assistants
16 with special ed. kids. Don't have a way of
17 determining how many special ed. kids we might have
18 or what severity we might have. So, yeah, we have --
19 unless there is the online teachers' count to us, I
20 don't know how we make that work.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

22 MS. BARNES: Yes. I forgot -- I failed to ask
23 the other question. I was looking at some of the
24 issues that were unresolved and I was wondering if
25 you could talk to me a little bit more about physical

1 activity time, whether it would be physical activity
2 meeting the requirements of physical activity time,
3 whether it be recess, how that is built in, since the
4 initial committee was unable to clarify that for us.

5 MS. MULLINS: There are two periods of
6 specifically recess and physical activity, P.E. We
7 have the availability of the gym for inclement times
8 for the children to workout and be active; two
9 separate playgrounds on the property for that to
10 happen. In the past, the teachers have utilized
11 portions of time within the class day to, when the
12 kids were getting unsettled, to letting them get up
13 and move around so they could get back to be focused.
14 And we consider that part of the daily plan so that
15 there would be a minimum of 90 minutes a day where
16 the kids would have physical activity.

17 MS. BARNES: And so would you be teaching --
18 would you have someone teaching the content standards
19 in physical education as well as meeting the required
20 time for physical activity, or --

21 MS. MULLINS: Yes. Actually, we have -- we
22 don't have it scheduled because we don't have a
23 charter yet. But we have been in communication with
24 different dance studios, with gymnastic studios, with
25 Marshall Arts studios, that would be willing to come

1 in and provide some of that training that could
2 continue throughout the school year. So there would
3 be guided activities and free time activity.

4 MS. BARNES: Okay. And I recognize that we're
5 looking at K-5, but as far as the -- not so much the
6 AP courses, since that's upper-level, but for the GT
7 services, the gifted and talented services, how are
8 you looking at providing that for those students in
9 those grades K-5 along with the other non-core
10 courses? I recognize you have the online possibility
11 but the non-core courses, were you looking at a way
12 to provide for the health, the music, the art?

13 MS. MULLINS: Some of that would come through
14 the Extension Service and through the U of A. Some
15 of it would be provided in the online courses that --
16 and obviously we want to meet standards and any
17 provider would be required to meet the standards in
18 the framework as required by ADE, and those being
19 subject to change. And we're beginning with the K-5;
20 our intent is at the beginning of each year that the
21 children would meet with parents and teachers and the
22 principal/director and initiate a personal plan to
23 move forward with the children, that it would follow
24 them so that it could be determined how we can best
25 help them, what courses, what interests and

1 activities they have, so that we can personalize what
2 they do and meet it.

3 MS. BARNES: Okay. And so I'm assuming that you
4 would also be depending upon the online provider for
5 the GT services for students that would --

6 MS. MULLINS: Initially.

7 MS. BARNES: -- qualify for that?

8 MS. MULLINS: Initially. Because, again, until
9 we can re-establish the student population we're --
10 the Community Trust is going to be subsidizing this
11 in a large way. I mean, and we're prepared to
12 because we understand that the kids and the parents
13 -- a lot of them are going to take a wait-and-see
14 attitude. The first year could be bare bones for us.
15 And we realize there is probably a cutoff point that
16 we're going to have to say "not this year, we'll try
17 it again next year," and just lose a year of the
18 charter. But we're -- again, we anticipate -- the
19 Community Trust anticipates that it's going to be a
20 hard first year pull and that it will be -- being
21 able to provide that year and provide the experiences
22 that will bring the kids back. And probably first
23 year anyway, since the issue on the teachers, that
24 looking at the potential of 60 students and the --
25 not three full teachers. I'm sure that we could make

1 that adjustment, if necessary, as part of the
2 agreement. And, again, it would be yet another
3 subsidy. But, again, we understand that the first
4 year is going to be the hardest year and that we're
5 going to need the guidance to get through that first
6 year, get to it and get through it and find out how
7 to adjust from there.

8 MS. WEBB: I just wanted to make mention of the
9 teachers and the ratio to the students. While we
10 know that it's important and we have to meet that,
11 please keep in mind that we have historically had a
12 large volunteer base of parents, 4H leaders, Boy
13 Scout/Girl Scout leaders that have come in to do all
14 sorts of stuff on our campus in the past. And all of
15 us are onboard to provide that same guidance, that
16 same support as needed. So if there is a shortfall
17 somewhere with a paid staff, for that one paid staff
18 there's three or four volunteers ready to step in and
19 help wherever they're needed. So just keep that in
20 mind, please.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I think the point to
22 clarify here is without a waiver then you would be
23 out of compliance and that would be an accreditation
24 issue.

25 MS. MULLINS: Then, would it be appropriate then

1 to, since our word is our bond at this situation, to
2 ask for that waiver today?

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes. That's a -- it's a
4 negotiation process.

5 MS. MULLINS: Then we would ask for that waiver
6 in order to be able to provide at least for the first
7 year.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

9 MS. PFEFFER: And continuing on with the
10 question about one of the waivers that also deals
11 with teachers, the waiver for 6-17-1501 -- and Legal
12 may need to help with the terminology there -- but it
13 would seem that you would be waiving that statute and
14 all -- and everything following that. That would
15 take away the requirement for any type of support and
16 looking at the quality of your teachers and providing
17 them with that support to grow and develop. And as
18 you indicated, especially if you're hiring new
19 teachers, you know, how are you going to evaluate how
20 well they're doing if you're waiving the entire code
21 that would deal with their evaluation and looking at
22 whether or not they're quality teachers? So unless
23 I'm misunderstanding something with regard to that
24 waiver request --

25 MS. MULLINS: Well, our intent -- and, again,

1 this would be a matter of guidance. Our intent on
2 the waiver is simply to be able to put the best
3 possible situation together and that we're going to
4 have educators that may not be licensed teachers and
5 -- but highly qualified to provide educator, whether
6 it be in robotics, whether it be in agriculture,
7 whether it's in beekeeping, whether it's in
8 aquaculture or forestry. And to be able to utilize
9 those people it was our understanding that being able
10 to then request that waiver that we were allowing
11 ourselves the opportunity to utilize those people
12 that could provide that.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: If I can follow-up on that, I
14 think it may just be a point of clarification. As
15 the way that I was reading the application, I think
16 perhaps the intent on that section of code was for a
17 waiver from the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act. And
18 within that section of code that's referenced it also
19 includes the evaluation, because there's another
20 separate section of code that includes evaluation
21 that's not referenced for a waiver. So I just wonder
22 if your intent by that particular section of code was
23 only to deal with the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and
24 perhaps just by chance capture part of the evaluation
25 also?

1 MS. MULLINS: Possibly. Again, we may have
2 thrown blanket issues out there thinking it was -- we
3 were protecting the educators that we wanted to bring
4 in and our ability to manage staff. This was a
5 committee effort and some input may have -- may not
6 really fit our situation. The part of it that is
7 concerning to you is about the Fair Dismissal?

8 DR. SAUNDERS: No, ma'am. I think the intent --
9 and this is just me guessing at the intent, but I
10 think it was towards the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act.
11 But within those sections of code that are referenced
12 concerning that it also includes part of the teacher
13 evaluation in 1504 -- 6-17-1504. And I don't know
14 that you intended to include that as a possible
15 waiver and that poses concerns to us on if you were
16 seeking a waiver from teacher evaluation.

17 MS. MULLINS: No. No, we are not. No.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: So would we need to look at those
19 specific sections of code and strike those from the
20 application?

21 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: I may need Legal's help on that,
23 but I think in particular 6-17-1504, there would not
24 be a request for a waiver from that one. Ms. Davis,
25 do you know -- do you have any guidance on any of the

1 ones that may have --

2 MS. DAVIS: No. The rest of them are actually
3 outside of that code. So I think 1504, with the
4 removal of that one, then the rest of it does just
5 apply to the Teacher Fair Dismissal. I will review
6 it and make sure, but I believe that that's it.

7 MS. MULLINS: And we are certainly -- whatever
8 Ms. Davis may find that is appropriate based on that
9 we are in agreement with.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins, you mentioned
11 a 99-year lease for the building. Which buildings do
12 you have? Which buildings are covered in that lease
13 and which ones are not?

14 MS. MULLINS: That went away. That was with --
15 what we had done with Dr. Abernathy when only there
16 was partial closure of the school. Last July 1st, we
17 had negotiated with -- after the school totally
18 closed, Dr. Kimbrell worked with us and the entire
19 property, the whole nine acres is now -- belongs to
20 the Community Trust, part and parcel, although we do
21 have a lease with them now for the bus yard.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. So you have access
23 to the full --

24 MS. MULLINS: Yes. Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The other thing that you

1 mentioned was the Head Start across the street,
2 potentially looking at those students as students
3 that would come to the charter school. Have you put
4 numbers to paper about how many kids that is?

5 MS. MULLINS: There's 20 enrolled this year.
6 Last year, as we will this year, we provide the
7 breakfast, lunch and snacks for the Head Start out of
8 the Paron kitchen, the school kitchen. And we
9 provided that last year; we'll provide it this year.
10 And the last count we got was that we were beginning
11 with 20. That may fall to 18, but they are limited
12 on the number that they can have.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So is that potentially 18
14 to 20 kindergarten students coming to the charter
15 school?

16 MS. MULLINS: That is probably 12. So those we
17 -- she said -- I'm sorry -- that there was nine last
18 year that moved out to kindergarten.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So I was trying to put in
20 my mind, you have some really strong pieces in
21 planning, and planning for a new school -- charter
22 school, traditional school, private school, any new
23 school, I would assume even planning to be a
24 homeschool -- has a lot of issues that are to be
25 discovered as you go through. But --

1 MS. MULLINS: Certainly.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- in your case, you have
3 a lot of things that are known. So you pretty well
4 know the community and you know the population; you
5 know the age of students in that area; and in your
6 community meetings you probably already have an idea
7 of how many students might be committed to the
8 charter school in the initial year. So with that
9 known information, do you kind of have in your mind
10 -- is the information provided in the application by
11 grade levels, is that pretty well known information
12 or is that projected, just randomly projected?

13 MS. MULLINS: It's projected based on the
14 feedback we have gotten from families. Keep in mind,
15 when I say that there is anywhere from 9 to 12 that
16 come out of Head Start, Head Start is low-income and
17 that doesn't include the children that are in private
18 daycare that would be coming into kindergarten out of
19 daycare. And there is probably another 30% that
20 would be added to that number.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And because your parents
22 are mobile and may have to travel to their jobs, is
23 your plan to have an extended day?

24 MS. MULLINS: Yes. Yes. There will be
25 afterschool activities and programs so that we can

1 keep kids occupied and learning, if possible, while
2 their parents are coming to get them. Because that
3 has even been an expressed concern. We have a former
4 Head Start teacher that is going to be handling some
5 afterschool daycare this year.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: That seems to be one of
7 the things that we've heard from parents in charter
8 school situations is how much they appreciate that
9 extended day that allows them to be more involved in
10 the student's activity and have them in that nice,
11 safe learning environment.

12 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

13 MS. WEBB: Can I add something real quick?

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Sure.

15 MS. WEBB: Okay. So to go back to U of A, U of
16 A actually after an afterschool -- offers an
17 afterschool 4H program which would be a continuity of
18 education and a continuance of what we've done in the
19 day, provided in a more casual way in the afternoon.
20 And the volunteers that run that afterschool program
21 have to go through a lot of training to be able to
22 provide that information and guidance to those kids
23 -- and background checks, yes. All of our 4H
24 volunteers have to have background checks if you come
25 into contact on an individual basis with any child.

1 So we have that to our favor as well.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: What is the number of
3 students currently involved in 4H in the Paron
4 community?

5 MS. WEBB: We have seven team leaders. We
6 currently work with 12 juniors and I have 6
7 Cloverbuds that are local, and 4 that actually come
8 to our program from the other end of the county.

9 MS. MULLINS: Cloverbuds are the young ones.

10 MS. WEBB: Yeah. The -- I'm sorry; the
11 Cloverbuds are 5 to 8, the juniors are 9 to 14, and
12 the seniors are tail-end 14 up to 19 years old. And
13 let me just mention that my team leaders -- I have 27
14 in the county; 4 of those went to college on full
15 scholarships from the 4H program, so there is support
16 for those kids even after they leave their elementary
17 and high school campuses.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

19 MS. MULLINS: And I will add to hers, she also
20 took a team, a WHE team, a wildlife habitat and
21 education team to West Virginia, representing Saline
22 County, and placed 5th nationally, so --

23 MS. WEBB: We have strong volunteers and strong
24 leaders.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

1 MS. SMITH: First, just a comment that your
2 passion for the community of Paron is evident and I
3 actually have several friends that had worked at the
4 Paron School District and all loved it and talked
5 about the community, in great lengths at times. My
6 concern kind of piggybacks on some of Ms. Coffman's
7 questions. The statement in the application about we
8 consider 50 students to be the minimum number of
9 students needed to be financially viable, and knowing
10 that Paron closed with around mid-60s as far as the
11 number of students, I have a hard time thinking that
12 you'll be able to pull all 60 of those kids back, 50
13 to 60 of those kids back, knowing that you have about
14 9 to 12 students in that community in that grade
15 level. And also considering that parents would have
16 to make the choice if they put their child in that
17 charter school that their primary students are going
18 to an online learning system versus, you know, face
19 to face.

20 MS. MULLINS: In part.

21 MS. SMITH: Huh?

22 MS. MULLINS: In part.

23 MS. SMITH: In part. In part. But the core
24 curriculum would basically be delivered in an online
25 platform. So I guess I'm just not sure -- and I

1 guess I need to hear more about how confident you
2 guys are about really being able to pull 50
3 elementary students back to the Paron school.

4 MS. MULLINS: I believe it's possible the first
5 year. If we can get them the first year, the numbers
6 will grow for the next year. It is not our intent to
7 pull from elsewhere. We're trying to serve our
8 community. I have had phone calls from people from
9 outside the area, asking, because it's an environment
10 that they want their children in. So I think the
11 unknown for us are those that we aren't looking at
12 getting that we will get. But considering, again,
13 the K-5 and the numbers that have already left that
14 are willing to come back, the ones that are still
15 living in Paron that are willing to come back to the
16 school, plus the elementary -- the preschool kids
17 that we can bring in, I'm pretty confident we can get
18 the 50. It's just going to be close. And I do
19 believe that we will be in a much better position the
20 second year when it's a matter of getting additional
21 kids that come in and having the word-of-mouth of,
22 "Gosh, this is what we got to do; this is what we've
23 done. What did you do today?"

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

25 MR. ROGERS: Yes, ma'am. I just have a few more

1 questions on some things. First of all, on the
2 transportation I noticed that you said you were going
3 to work on agreements and you were working with some
4 churches?

5 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

6 MR. ROGERS: I just -- I kind of wonder about
7 the liability issues there.

8 MS. MULLINS: That has become our problem. One
9 of the --

10 MR. ROGERS: I live in Saline County, so I know
11 the roads that they'll be driving on, so that's why I
12 was asking.

13 MS. MULLINS: Yeah. And that has been
14 problematic in creating those transportation -- we
15 may have to go get Clovis after all. The 4H has a
16 bus called Clovis that is available to us. So it may
17 be that we find that we have to find points, very
18 much like Perryville does and Bryant does, as far as
19 picking a spot and parents bring their kids to those
20 spots and we pick up at those spots.

21 However, you may be familiar with Second Chance
22 Ranch that's run by Perry Black. It is within our
23 school district, and prior to consolidation they
24 brought kids to the Paron campus. And I have been in
25 communication with them, and when they have students

1 that fit the age range that we have they are very
2 interested. Because, apparently, they have met
3 recently with Bryant trying to figure out better
4 options for them having a smaller campus and more
5 direct attention to the kids, especially because of
6 their situations.

7 So we have not -- no, we have not resolved the
8 situation on transportation. One of the reasons we
9 requested the waiver is so that we could work that
10 out. And, again, it may be that we're looking at
11 providing that for ourselves.

12 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

13 STATE REPRESENTATIVE GATES: If I could, I'd
14 like to address the Second Chance Ranch. I deal with
15 them very closely. As you know, DHS deals with some
16 of the -- some children that have come out of some
17 very, very scary situations. And going out there --
18 I do go out there on a fairly regular basis. We're
19 taking kids -- some of these kids that are wanting to
20 escape in life because they come from families that
21 they've seen some very tragic things that nobody
22 should have to see and we're putting them in a school
23 district that they can just almost escape to and is
24 not the best environment for them. And trying to
25 find another place, other than our largest school

1 district -- because these are kids that many of them
2 have very many emotional and social needs that need a
3 smaller system so they don't just disappear. And
4 that's part of the challenge with Second Chance Ranch
5 is they deal with kids that need that smaller
6 environment. In fact, I was -- have been talking --
7 even if they went to Perryville, somewhere that
8 wasn't so large. When they lost Paron -- and, of
9 course, if they got through the 5th grade it wouldn't
10 help the majority of the kids that they have, but
11 that is a consideration that the state has to deal
12 with, kids that are in their care. Because if we
13 don't take care of them on the younger end, the older
14 they get and the more that those needs aren't met the
15 better chance that we have of those challenges in the
16 future that cost the state a whole lot more money
17 than some of them on this front-end. So I think
18 that's a consideration that we need to look at. I
19 don't know how many they have right now; I'm thinking
20 they have between 20 and 30 kids right now, but they
21 are growing. And if you've never had a chance to go
22 out there it would be worthwhile for y'all to see,
23 because those are special needs kids as far as their
24 environment that we need to consider, and I think the
25 charter would be ideal for those kids.

1 MR. ROGERS: I have a question because wouldn't
2 you have to have a lottery process too though? So --

3 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

4 MR. ROGERS: -- what happens if only half of the
5 kids of that Second Chance Ranch got admitted and the
6 other half didn't? Wouldn't that pose additional
7 problem too, as far as the transportation was
8 concerned?

9 MS. MULLINS: It might be. And I don't mean to
10 be flip when I say this, but that would be a
11 wonderful situation for us to be in since we're
12 discussing the need for --

13 MR. ROGERS: But --

14 MS. MULLINS: I do understand.

15 MR. ROGERS: I knew you would. But if you were
16 still struggling with how the transportation would
17 work I could see it would be a good and bad problem
18 for you to have with the transportation.

19 MS. MULLINS: Yeah.

20 MS. WEBB: In reference directly to Second
21 Chance Ranch --

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Microphone, please.

23 MS. WEBB: Oh, I'm sorry. In reference to
24 Second Chance Ranch, they provide their own
25 transportation for their students. Those students

1 don't -- have not in the past, nor do I -- I would
2 foresee them getting on public transportation. And I
3 know that they have more than one van in their
4 facility, so --

5 MS. MULLINS: He's talking about the lottery,
6 about positions for the students within the school,
7 if there were -- we had too many.

8 MR. ROGERS: Right.

9 MS. WEBB: Right. But at Second Chance Ranch
10 specifically you asked --

11 MR. ROGERS: Well, I was just wondering if that
12 -- because what you were saying about they would
13 hopefully have all those students there and then only
14 some of them get in and some who don't then Second
15 Chance is busing to Bryant and the charter, if the
16 charter passed? I guess that's --

17 MS. MULLINS: That -- yes.

18 MR. ROGERS: -- what I'm trying to -- and then,
19 plus, I go back to the .75 special ed. teacher. That
20 comes back around that it's only .75.

21 MS. MULLINS: Either that or they could take
22 advantage of our learning center and they could be
23 charter online students and participate in the
24 learning center on campus and not be part of our
25 charter. I'm just saying, there are a lot of

1 opportunities for us to work with.

2 MR. ROGERS: Okay. But that is one of my
3 concerns is the transportation thing, and I can go
4 ahead -- unless somebody else wants to kick around a
5 little bit. But I have another one concerning, just
6 since we're talking, child nutrition. I was noticing
7 that we have a budget of 60 kids but only \$6,000 for
8 child nutrition, so I'm wondering how that's going to
9 work. And I noticed that you're -- in the
10 application it talked about the Farm to Table thing,
11 program that you were talking about. I think I read
12 that in there. But I was wondering how that comes
13 into play with child nutrition. What guidelines does
14 that have? Because you will have to follow the child
15 nutrition guidelines.

16 MS. MULLINS: Absolutely, just as we have had
17 with Head Start. And please understand that since we
18 have the Head Start contract it subsidizes some of
19 our costs in having the kids at the school. And
20 since part of our program is to have the Farm to
21 Table -- and we have a local veteran at the Old Crow
22 store, Damon Helton, who is going to help us
23 facilitate some of that. He will also be a learning
24 opportunity for the kids as far as small business,
25 how one goes in procuring produce and goods for the

1 store. But -- and keep in mind, we're also going to
2 have, and have begun, the gardening on the campus
3 that will also be utilized for the lunches. We have
4 done that in small part from the start.

5 MR. ROGERS: I'm -- so --

6 MS. MULLINS: Your concern is the amount of
7 money involved?

8 MR. ROGERS: That, and to make sure that we were
9 following the child nutrition guidelines for the
10 students that were there. Because I don't know
11 enough about the Farm to Table; that's why I was
12 asking. But I think, if I'm understanding you, your
13 Head Start has enough money in it that you can
14 subsidize what you're going to need for the 60 kids
15 at the charter school, but you only budgeted \$6,000
16 for child nutrition. Is that what -- did I
17 misunderstand? Was that what you were saying?

18 MS. MULLINS: No. We are very confident -- if
19 there is any part of this program that we are
20 confident in, it is the ability to take care of the
21 kids' nutrition and do it at a cost that seems
22 probably too small. But we managed quite well last
23 year with Head Start. We had to abide by your
24 guidelines. We actually had some special needs
25 students that we had to provide calorie count, carb

1 count; they're Type 1 diabetics. We also had a
2 nutritionist working with us this year to help us
3 even hone that down a little bit more.

4 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

5 MS. MULLINS: So, no, that is one thing that
6 we're -- we've got no concern on.

7 MS. BOYD: I think I might be able to help just
8 a tiny bit. Child nutrition is currently -- they
9 currently have a program with Farm to Table, so that
10 part also has regulations that go along with it and
11 they can work with them to make sure that their Farm
12 to Table follows the Farm to Table that's a part of
13 child nutrition.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins, have you been
15 working with the Bryant School District? Have you
16 been in conversation with Dr. Kimbrell or anyone else
17 on his staff?

18 MS. MULLINS: Well, my last communication was
19 yesterday. But in reference to -- I mean, our
20 biggest conversations have been concerning --

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I'm sorry; if you'll get
22 to the microphone.

23 MS. MULLINS: I'm sorry. Our biggest
24 conversations have been, well, recent. They've been
25 any comments or suggestions he might have where the

1 charter was concerned. And, again, he was the one
2 that brought it to us initially, asking if we were
3 interested.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I just wondered if there
5 was any conversation about transportation. He's
6 already running buses on that route, all over Paron,
7 and I just wondered if there was any collaborative
8 conversations about possible transportation.

9 MS. MULLINGS: No, there hadn't been, but
10 certainly talking to him or Mr. Farmer would be
11 possible. I hadn't really considered it but that
12 would certainly be a possibility.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Are there any additional
14 questions from the Panel? Dr. Saunders.

15 DR. SAUNDERS: I wanted to take some time to go
16 through some of the requested waivers and just seek
17 some clarification and possibly some cleanup.
18 Looking at the first set of waivers dealing with the
19 superintendent, licensed employees, licensure
20 waivers, but then it gets down in 6-15-2302 and that
21 is dealing with the business manager. And I'm
22 curious why that one in particular is a requested
23 waiver?

24 MS. MULLINS: Being as small as we will start
25 out, our intent was utilizing both the board as the

1 reviewer of the financial issues and having an
2 independent accountant that handled the bookwork for
3 us so that it wasn't something that we had to have a
4 fulltime person for.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: So I guess in that case would the
6 board approve all expenditures?

7 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

8 DR. SAUNDERS: Would that possibly pose some
9 timeliness issues, waiting for the next board meeting
10 before certain expenditures can be addressed?

11 MS. MULLINS: I wouldn't think so. I would
12 think if there was an issue that needed to be
13 addressed that a board meeting could be called for
14 that purpose. Otherwise, I would anticipate that it
15 would be routine expenditures that could be handled
16 on a monthly basis.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Continuing on, one that I
18 have a big concern about is the waiver on 6-18-1001
19 and the following laws, and that is referencing
20 student services including guidance counseling,
21 career counseling, suicide prevention; the list is
22 very long. And I'm wondering why that would need a
23 waiver?

24 MS. MULLINS: We will have counseling services
25 available to the students. And it may have been the

1 purpose of the request for the waiver that there not
2 be an additional expenditure expected. And I realize
3 that the waivers are an important issue in the
4 issuing of a charter and the concern over the running
5 of the charter. And I guess part of -- leap of faith
6 is a bad word, but our intent is to provide
7 everything necessary for these students, to keep an
8 eye on them and provide the monitoring, the
9 performance evaluations so that we are aware of the
10 problems a child might have. And if they need to be
11 directly addressed on a certain issue, then that
12 would be the intent of our school. I'm sorry. A lot
13 of the things provided in there would also fall under
14 some of our U of A/Extension Service services in
15 being able to guide, mentor, develop the students and
16 give them an opportunity to feel comfortable being
17 able to voice concerns. In a large situation that
18 often doesn't happen; it's often missed. Because of
19 the size that we're working with, we would hope that
20 wouldn't happen or would be less likely to happen.

21 Is your concern that we wouldn't be offering
22 those services and, therefore, the concern for the
23 waiver?

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah. I think within the --
25 well, the concern would be that within that law those

1 services are required to be provided. And so as a
2 panel if we were to grant that waiver, essentially,
3 even though we say "intent," but we could not insure
4 that those students would be receiving those services
5 if the waiver was granted. And that has great
6 concern to me.

7 MS. MULLINS: I think I can speak on behalf of
8 the Trust and say if that is of concern we will
9 remove that request for that waiver because it is our
10 intent to provide those services. And it may not be
11 by one individual; it may be by multiple individuals
12 that have a part in the process of the child's plan.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. So let me go the other
14 direction on that. Would you be more comfortable
15 with leaving that in but only as it applies to your
16 alternative learning environment? Which I think
17 you've asked for waivers in other areas for the ALE.
18 And there are some -- there is some ALE language
19 within that section of code, so I think you probably
20 would want to retain the waiver specifically to ALE.

21 MS. MULLINS: Yes. That would be fine.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: May I continue?

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes. I think I'd just
24 like to add one point of clarification to Ms.
25 Mullins, is our intent is not to make this difficult.

1 MS. MULLINS: I understand that totally.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Our intent is to -- we are
3 tasked with making sure that Arkansas students are
4 provided the best quality education. And so with
5 that, it's to make sure that you can be a viable
6 school in the state of Arkansas. And so we would be
7 remiss if we had not gone through detail by detail to
8 make sure that everything is in place to insure that
9 you're an accredited school for our students. And so
10 that's the intent that we have. I just want to make
11 sure that you know that, as we go through these.
12 It's just part of the process to insure that students
13 are in the right places.

14 MS. MULLINS: And we appreciate that, I mean,
15 going into the detail. Again, we are not served by a
16 large box educational group. We have been grassroots
17 in the past. We are aware that we need guidance in a
18 lot of compliances and intend to seek that. We just
19 want the opportunity to try. And I realize that in
20 even making that decision to give us that opportunity
21 that you have to have a concern for the students that
22 we would be bringing into the situation, and then
23 saying, "You didn't cut it." Our kids have already
24 been through that. They've already been dealt some
25 pretty stiff blows. But they have come back to us

1 and said, "We want to come back home. We want to
2 have an opportunity here." And we have put together
3 the best educational prospect that we can. And,
4 again, the Community Trust is willing to help
5 subsidize it until either we can make it or see that
6 we can't. But I think our children are worth the
7 effort.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Well, we're just trying to
9 help you think through the process so that you can.

10 MS. MULLINS: I understand that and appreciate
11 it.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. The next one, I think this
14 would be for Legal. It's concerning the waiver on 6-
15 17-2203. I don't know, is that possible to even
16 waive?

17 MS. DAVIS: I believe so. Hang on one second; I
18 have a lot of notes on this page.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I mean, I think there are
20 other laws that would --

21 MS. DAVIS: Yeah, there are. I actually have a
22 whole lot of notes on other things to kind of
23 effectuate some of these waivers, whenever you're
24 ready for me to do so, and that is listed as one of
25 them.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Okay. I'll wait. Were
2 you going to address 6-14-427?

3 MS. DAVIS: I was.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: And 6-42-01?

5 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

6 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I'll wait on that one. I
7 had just one other area here to clarify. I noticed a
8 request on waiver 6-17-201 dealing with personnel
9 policies, as well as 6-17-2301 dealing with written
10 policies. But when it came down to -- at another
11 point the request was only concerning the website
12 posting of compensation but saying that the website
13 posting of the other criteria would be in place,
14 including all the policies. And so I was really
15 confused on if there's a waiver from having the
16 policies why a specific waiver to the website posting
17 that would require you to post the policies? If that
18 question makes sense.

19 MS. MULLINS: I am not familiar with that one
20 being requested, and I don't know of any reason we
21 would be concerned about not posting anything,
22 considering -- being involved with our water
23 authority, FOI is -- we would be required.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Well, I think, if I can just
25 speculate here -- but I assume with the multiple

1 waivers from licensure and other things, such as
2 teacher salary schedule, things of that nature, and
3 then the pieces that are required to be posted would
4 include some of those things that you've already
5 requested a waiver from -- I guess my question is:
6 are you going to have policies in general, aside from
7 teachers salary schedule, and post those on the
8 website?

9 MS. MULLINS: Yes. I mean, we will even have
10 student policies posted on the website. The student
11 handbook will be on the website.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I'm not -- I understand
13 fully what you're saying. I'm just not clear myself
14 on how those waivers then should look, which ones
15 should still be applied for and which ones shouldn't.
16 And I'll defer possibly to Legal later on that one.
17 So that's all I have for now.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

19 DR. GOTCHER: Ms. Boyd, may I ask a question of
20 you and possibly Ms. Davis? Looking at the
21 application in its entirety, I see there's still some
22 remaining concerns. Can you describe the support
23 that you and your office provided --

24 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh. So --

25 DR. GOTCHER: -- the Paron charter?

1 MS. BOYD: We did the internal review -- well,
2 after we -- after they put in a letter for intent,
3 we held a workshop to go over the application and
4 everything the application was requesting. And they
5 had opportunity to ask questions, like all other
6 applicants. We received the application; we reviewed
7 it in our internal review; then we sent the
8 application back out with things that we would like
9 for them to clarify; they returned with responses;
10 and then after they returned with responses -- no,
11 sorry -- when we sent out our questions from the
12 internal review committee, at that point we scheduled
13 -- we did schedule a time for us to talk about the
14 application and I think we spent about 30 or 45
15 minutes going over what the review committee was
16 trying to clarify. And then after that, they
17 returned their responses and then that's pretty much
18 the end of our technical assistance.

19 DR. GOTCHER: So the remaining concerns that we
20 see in the application you've addressed with them at
21 this point or is that --

22 MS. BOYD: No. The remaining concerns we did
23 not have the opportunity to address with them.

24 DR. GOTCHER: Okay. Okay. And, Ms. Davis, I
25 guess a similar question, some of the concerns about

1 the waivers and so-forth that have been addressed,
2 have you and your team been able to work with the
3 applicant in addressing some of these questions?

4 MS. DAVIS: Well, like Ms. Boyd said, we go
5 through the internal review; we send them back
6 comments; they have an opportunity to respond; and
7 then we provide a final. You know, I have not been
8 requested to ask -- or to provide any additional, and
9 Ms. Boyd hasn't notified me that they had any
10 additional questions. But that's our standard
11 process, is they do get an opportunity to respond.

12 DR. GOTCHER: Sure. All right. Thank you. Ms.
13 Mullins, thank you for, as it was said earlier, your
14 passion. And the history of the Paron School
15 District and its closure is well documented; it
16 certainly made a huge impact. And that's one of the
17 struggles that I have as an employee of this
18 department is how many of our laws impact
19 communities. And while I support the laws, I also
20 support the communities. And you used a term earlier
21 in your presentation that I wrote down, you used the
22 word "reboot." And one of the things that the law
23 provides is an opportunity for an open-enrollment
24 charter. And so while the opportunity is there,
25 while there's also the laws that are in place

1 regarding school consolidation, many times those
2 collide. But I think the reboot, it was an
3 interesting word and I think the challenge I'm facing
4 internally right now is just the capacity and the
5 quality of this particular application. I think the
6 spirit is there. And so I'd like to ask just a
7 couple of questions, just a deeper dive so you can
8 help me and the Panel on the support of the
9 community. One of the things that I found
10 encouraging was the potential for mentorships within
11 the community. I realize there's not any formalized
12 agreements at this point, but maybe we could talk a
13 little about the mentorships and how -- of course, in
14 the first year, if we do the K-4 or K-5, however the
15 application is designed, can you talk a little bit
16 more about the potential for the mentorships?
17 Because I think that's a strength that I would be
18 encouraged to explore deeper. So maybe you could
19 address that.

20 MS. MULLINS: Well, we have a presence in the
21 community of Game and Fish and they have -- even
22 starting in Head Start, they come in and provide
23 programs for the children. Our local specialist with
24 Game and Fish is willing to work with the kids.
25 Again, we have to go through the whole process with

1 Game and Fish and it would have to be of a certain
2 age --

3 DR. GOTCHER: Sure.

4 MS. MULLINS: -- before they would provide that.
5 But we have them available. We also have the
6 foresters with Green Bay and Deltic that we have the
7 ability to choose sites that the kids can study the
8 growth of the trees and the patterns and how that's
9 to work. We have -- actually, we had an electrician
10 that was working on our fan in the gymnasium who
11 commented on how he couldn't find young people 18 to
12 25 that were skilled in his craft and he would more
13 than welcome the opportunity to come in and provide a
14 mentorship for students that were interested.
15 Whether the child decided to go into being an
16 electrician or not, they could sure earn a nice wage
17 while they were going through college.

18 DR. GOTCHER: That's right.

19 MS. MULLINS: We also have a local plumber who
20 has acknowledged the same thing. And the only reason
21 he's able to continue his business right now is his
22 son came into it. But they stay quite busy
23 themselves. In the farther reaching community, we
24 have, again, the Old Crow store with the farming
25 aspect there and the mentorship on the farm there.

1 We also have a rather well-known knife artisan in the
2 community. We have several crafters of different
3 kinds that are a dying breed. There are just a lot
4 of opportunities. And, again, part of the
5 opportunity will come through the U of A system and
6 some of the specialists there that will allow the
7 kids to join. There is -- I'm sorry. There is the
8 research stations that welcome the students in to
9 participate in those.

10 MS. WEBB: For the mentorships for some of the
11 younger grades, we -- am I okay with the mic? Okay.
12 The younger, the Cloverbud groups -- and the reason I
13 keep going back to 4H is because their philosophy on
14 teaching young students is to create productive
15 adults and citizens. And I feel like for Paron that
16 fits our already -- our mission statements that are
17 already in place. So for the younger ages, the
18 programs that we would access through U of A for
19 those mentorships are specifically designed for those
20 age groups and those volunteers that work within
21 those programs are trained to work with those age
22 groups. So locally we have a program that has
23 offered their services to come out and set up
24 beehives to teach that whole process. Because one of
25 the things that's lost in young people today is where

1 the roots are, where does the food come from, where
2 does -- where did that building start. And so we
3 have volunteers that work specifically in areas that
4 we hope to have on our campus. I mean, the
5 gardening, we have a master gardeners program. We
6 have a master gardener in our community willing to
7 work with those kids, and the beehives for young
8 children. So until we have those older grades in
9 place, we do have specifically trained volunteers
10 that are willing to come in and do specific work in
11 specific areas. And most of those are through U of
12 A, so the background checks will obviously be in
13 place and the training hours are already done and
14 they're approved. So we're just accessing their
15 talents.

16 DR. GOTCHER: Thank you. I believe the
17 potential certainly is there, and I'm certainly
18 impressed with the vast array of skill that could be
19 afforded to the kids. I'm just still working through
20 just the capacity of the community to be able to
21 support the number of students required to remain a
22 sound financial institution. So I'm still working
23 through that. Is there -- are there any other
24 comments from any other of the guests that are here
25 that can help our Panel understand the strength or

1 the soundness of the potential school in this case?

2 MS. WEBB: I will say my daughter is a junior,
3 so obviously she won't have a direct benefit of the
4 courses at Paron. But had I been given this
5 opportunity when she was younger, knowing that my kid
6 is one of the ones that doesn't have the space to sit
7 on the school bus so I'm driving her back and forth,
8 and to know that there are kids that are moving to
9 these larger schools that are overwhelmed -- I mean,
10 I know Perryville to you guys is not a large school.
11 But it is a large campus compared to what we had,
12 even K through 12, in Paron. The kids that are
13 moving to those schools, they're having -- they're
14 struggling because they're lost. They're not a part
15 of the Perryville community. They're not a part of
16 the Bryant community. So when they get there,
17 they're on their own. And there are a lot of parents
18 that even though their kids are established with a
19 teacher there, they don't have that social support.
20 And they have a willingness to pull them, bring them
21 back to Paron, bring them back home at the younger
22 ages before they are a freshman or a sophomore in
23 high school. Because, obviously, once you get to a
24 high school grade and you're set in your school
25 that's where you want to be; that's where you want to

1 graduate. As a younger student, as a mom I would
2 welcome -- and I know other parents as well are
3 hoping, praying that we get this school so the 4th
4 graders or 3rd graders can come back. And when we
5 say we don't want to pull from the other schools, for
6 me the thought is primarily those upper grades. We
7 want them to finish where they're comfortable. We
8 don't want to disrupt what they have. But a lot of
9 our kids have not adjusted to where they are right
10 now. So they're going to be in an environment, a new
11 environment with us, or they're going to be in an
12 unhappy environment where they're at. So there's a
13 willingness for those students to come back.

14 DR. GOTCHER: Good. Thank you. That is all
15 now, Madam Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I have a quick question.
17 Does the Community -- I forget what you called it --
18 if I made a note of that -- the Community --

19 MS. WEBB: The trust.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The Community Trust, yes.
21 Are you financially sound enough to support the
22 district in its first year -- or the school in its
23 first year?

24 MS. WEBB: We currently have a fair amount of
25 money in the account. We also have community

1 supporters who have a willingness to provide support
2 along the way as well. And we have community members
3 that have -- I don't really know how to say it
4 without being tacky -- but they have come there to
5 get away from town. So they're in Paron to get away
6 from town, and they are financially able to offer
7 that support. They don't have a willingness to
8 commit before the school is in place. But the money,
9 the efforts, the support is there. We just have to
10 have, you know, your support in order to get those
11 finances in place.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I spent the first 20 years
13 on a gravel road.

14 MS. WEBB: So you know.

15 MS. SMITH: And this may be a question for
16 Legal. If we were to approve their charter today,
17 can we do it contingent upon certain factors to come
18 back in the spring and prove? So if we were able --
19 if we approved it could we say contingent upon the
20 number of students enrolled, the securing of funds,
21 or that there's evidence and proof of funds, you
22 know, that they did -- they do have a minimum number
23 of students that they have parents have actively
24 enrolled? I mean, something to show -- I mean, can
25 we do that? Can we approve something contingent on

1 something and ask them to come back in the spring to
2 show?

3 MS. DAVIS: I mean, you can approve it with
4 contingencies. I would just be sure that you think
5 about how those contingencies -- like when they're
6 going to have their lottery. Maybe they don't know
7 how many students because their lottery is not going
8 to be until June. And then at that point what
9 happens to -- you know -- if they only have 50
10 students and you've said 60, and then those parents
11 and what their options -- so I would just make sure
12 that you -- kind of caution that you give them enough
13 time to meet the contingencies but not put the
14 community or the students in a bind by doing it so
15 early or so late or something like that. So I would
16 just, you know, be mindful of that.

17 MS. SMITH: Right. I guess, just a comment -- I
18 mean, I just have so many questions but I understand
19 the predicament they're in as far as they've not been
20 granted it, so a lot of the things that they would do
21 they can't do until they're granted. But I have so
22 many questions pertaining to, well, what if, what if,
23 what if. So I'm just struggling there.

24 MS. BARNES: While I appreciate Mrs. Smith's
25 statements just a moment ago, I do want to be very

1 clear that I am uncomfortable with precedent setting
2 of contingencies. So I don't want it to be unclear
3 if the -- should the vote go in any direction I
4 wanted to make sure that I stated that one. Because
5 we do have to be aware that how we determine these
6 applications and the outcome then that precedent is
7 set for -- from this day forward. So I'm a little
8 uncomfortable with contingencies.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: At this time, Ms. Davis,
10 if you would help us clear up all waiver issues.

11 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And if it's appropriate,
13 Ms. Mullins is there to say yes, no. And, Ms.
14 Mullins, your response is part of the record.

15 MS. MULLINS: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. DAVIS: I will attempt to help you clear
17 them up. Now keep in mind when I review the waivers
18 I look at them as like can they, not should they or
19 how does it fit with their thing. So with that --

20 Okay. So on page 1 under Personnel, I have the
21 clarification that under --

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And, Ms. Davis, which
23 document are you on?

24 MS. DAVIS: I'm looking at this one that's kind
25 of color-coded.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The legal review?

2 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Thank you. That's
4 helpful.

5 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So under Arkansas Code 6-17-
6 1501 et seq., I have that that's going to be with the
7 exception of 6-17-1504 regarding the teacher
8 evaluation.

9 MS. MULLINS: With the exception of. Yes.

10 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And, Ms. Mullins, if
12 you'll speak into the microphone for the record
13 please.

14 MS. MULLINS: Yes, I agree.

15 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I also have that they need a
16 waiver of class size in order to effectuate their
17 intended purpose, which is the Standards of
18 Accreditation 10.02. I would really prefer that they
19 state the class sizes that they intend to have for
20 kindergarten; right now, it's 20-to-1. For grades 1
21 through 3, it's 23 average but 25 max to one; 4 to 6
22 is 25 average, 28 max; and 7 to 12 is 30-to-1. So I
23 would need to clarify what would be their maximum for
24 each size. You're welcome to look at my chicken
25 scratch.

1 MS. MULLINS: And those are the requirements
2 currently?

3 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

4 MS. MULLINS: Kindergarten would be the request
5 of 25, and the 1 through 3 would be 30, the same. We
6 would --

7 DR. GOTCHER: To 25 in kindergarten?

8 MS. MULLINS: 30 on the 4 to 6 because that
9 would be as far as --

10 MS. DAVIS: And then are you going to maintain
11 --

12 MS. MULLINS: Yes. Yes.

13 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

15 MS. PFEFFER: Yeah. And there may be several
16 clarifications. And I guess I need to -- so on a
17 waiver of class size, does that extend to special
18 education also?

19 MS. DAVIS: No. This is K through 12 would be
20 individually; they can request individual components
21 or not. But ALE and special education would still
22 need to maintain their class sizes.

23 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Would that be extending the
24 class size with a teacher's aid in the classroom also
25 or just extending the class size for one teacher to

1 that many students?

2 MS. MULLINS: That would include a teacher's aid
3 in the classroom.

4 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

5 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So you're going to maintain
6 the 7 to 12 30-to-1.

7 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

8 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So then we don't need this.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We didn't hear that.

10 MS. DAVIS: No. She just -- I wanted
11 confirmation that the 7 to 12 class size was not
12 included in the class size waiver, that they will
13 maintain their 30-to-1 with no more than 150
14 students.

15 MS. BARNES: Did she speak to the grades 4 --

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And 5.

17 MS. BARNES: -- and 5 since the first year is K-
18 5? She said 1 to -- grades 1 to 3 would be 30.

19 MS. DAVIS: And she also said 4 to 6 at 30.

20 MS. BARNES: Okay. We didn't hear that.

21 MS. MULLINS: I'm sorry. Yes. On the 4 to 6 it
22 was also 30.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

24 MS. SMITH: Okay. I want to clarify something.
25 So in a K-5 school where most -- you're going to have

1 two teachers and you're going to combine grades, so
2 most likely you're going to put your kindergarten and
3 1st grade together, possibly even your 2nd grade. So
4 you would be restricted to your lowest number. So if
5 you said kindergarten was 25, your K-1 together would
6 be 25; you couldn't go to 30. Am I correct?

7 Jennifer, is that -- I'm sorry.

8 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

9 MS. SMITH: Ms. Davis. Okay. And so just
10 trying to think that through with you -- so you would
11 in essence probably be asking for the cap of 25 for K
12 and 1. Are you -- were you thinking of having 2nd
13 grade involved too, or are you thinking a K-1-2 and a
14 3-4-5 teacher or how were you looking at that?

15 MS. MULLINS: Initially, for the first year,
16 yes.

17 MS. SMITH: Okay.

18 MS. MULLINS: And that -- yes.

19 MS. SMITH: Okay. So if you were thinking K-1-2
20 together you would be capped at 25. Just trying to
21 make you see that. And then your 3rd, 4th and 5th
22 you'd be capped at 30, and that gives you an
23 enrollment of 55 students.

24 MS. MULLINS: Okay. But we requested the -- oh,
25 I did say 25.

1 MS. SMITH: So I'm just trying to talk you
2 through that so you --

3 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

4 MS. SMITH: -- you're not counting by grades.

5 MS. MULLINS: If obviously we're speaking about
6 two teachers, and there's going to -- with the
7 assumption that we're talking kindergarten, 1st and
8 2nd, yes, it would have to be a cap of 30. And then
9 4th, 5th -- 3rd, 4th and 5th would be a cap of 30 for
10 that teacher.

11 MS. SMITH: Okay. And so you would be looking
12 at an average of maybe 10 kindergartners, 10 1st
13 graders, 10 2nd graders, with the cap. Okay.

14 MS. DAVIS: Do you want to modify your --

15 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

16 MS. DAVIS: -- K to 30? So your class size --
17 okay. So the waiver is for kindergarten to 30, 1
18 through 3 to 30, and 4 to 6 to 30, and 7 to 12 will
19 remain the same?

20 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

21 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I did -- oh, and, Dr.
22 Saunders, you had asked about 6-17-2203, about
23 minimum salaries. That can be waived. It goes along
24 with the 6-17-2403, along with Sections 6 and 8 of
25 the requirements for personnel policies. And we have

1 done it in the past.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: And that's regarding the 2203?

3 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: So, okay. If I can just follow-
5 up with you on that one. So my understanding is that
6 is setting the rate for minimum wage. And would that
7 not be contrary to possible labor laws?

8 MS. DAVIS: We've done it in the past. I mean,
9 most -- a lot of our charters have these. And what
10 it is, it's not so much that we allow them to --
11 because, obviously, we can't agree to them to violate
12 federal law, but it talks about the increase by a
13 percentage equal to the percentage increase of the
14 consumer price index. That's usually what I believe
15 that most of the charters are looking for the waiver
16 from.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Thank you. Yes, that's what I
18 was looking for. Thank you.

19 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So on this waiver section on
20 page 2, there's a waiver requested of Arkansas Code
21 Annotated 6-14-427. I am uncertain what that is, and
22 I'm not sure if you meant that to be something else
23 or -- I'm going to need clarification on that.

24 MS. MULLINS: Because I can't help you with that
25 one, I would say we don't need it.

1 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So we can remove that one?

2 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

3 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So that would be removed.

4 And then there was some discussion earlier on
5 Arkansas Code Annotated 6-18-1001 dealing with
6 guidance counseling. And I was uncertain; there was
7 some discussion about whether or not they were going
8 to use that or not. Did you want to keep that? I
9 know that we provided in the additional materials
10 certain sections of the rules that you would need for
11 specific code, but I was not certain if that was
12 something that you were going to --

13 MS. MULLINS: Our intent was for at least
14 initially to not be required to have a full-time
15 guidance counselor, that we were going to use
16 counseling services. And in lieu of walking astray
17 of the requirement, that was the reason for asking
18 for that waiver. But we will have counseling
19 services, just not a paid employee.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Well, it's as much about
21 pay as it is license. That's why there's waivers.

22 MS. DAVIS: One of the other questions I had is
23 whether or not their licensure waivers would apply to
24 core or non-core courses only.

25 MS. MULLINS: As initially we would be relying

1 on the provider of the online courses for the core
2 courses to have the certification for those teachers,
3 I believe we'd be safe in saying only in the non-core
4 courses.

5 MS. DAVIS: Okay. And then the last one I had
6 was you had requested -- this is the next-to-last
7 page, page 3, you'd requested a waiver of Arkansas
8 Code 6-42-01.

9 MS. MULLINS: I might have a little
10 clarification on that one, that because the problem
11 with the connections or other provider might be that
12 they don't have an Arkansas licensure, that we might
13 need to have that waiver in place for both core and
14 non-core, if that would create a problem.

15 MS. DAVIS: And that's fine just as long as you
16 know --

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

18 MS. PFEFFER: May I ask that -- whether or not
19 you would then insure that they would meet Arkansas
20 qualified teacher requirements?

21 MS. MULLINS: Absolutely.

22 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. DAVIS: That was going to be my question
24 too. Okay. So you'd requested a waiver of 6-42-01.
25 I am not certain what that is. I'm not sure if you

1 were maybe trying to get a gifted and talented waiver
2 or did you mean that to be something else?

3 MS. MULLINS: I'm assuming gifted and talented.

4 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So if you want a waiver of
5 gifted and talented, you'll need a waiver of 6-42-
6 109, 6-20-2208(6)(c)(6), and also Section 18 of the
7 Standards and the ADE rules governing gifted and
8 talented program.

9 MS. MULLINS: Then I would request that.

10 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So that one for gifted and
11 talented. And the last thing that I did notice --
12 and, again, this is my -- I don't know how they're
13 doing it, just whether or not they can. I did notice
14 that there was no waivers requested for school boards
15 and that is traditionally one that our charters get.
16 And they be willing to comply with, you know, all the
17 other requirements; I just wanted to point that out.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins?

19 MS. MULLINS: That was a concern that came to us
20 late in the game and realized that because it was --
21 the school board requirements were based on a
22 district that we obviously omitted those and
23 shouldn't have. Because, obviously, if we're not a
24 district those would not apply to us.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So you're requesting the

1 waiver?

2 MS. MULLINS: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

4 MS. PFEFFER: But just a little while ago when
5 we were talking about the business manager and not
6 having one and that the board would be approving all
7 financial purchases, if there's a waiver from a
8 school board what would the board of directors look
9 like? And how would that work in them being the
10 approver of all business transactions? I think that
11 was already something I was a little bit unsure
12 about. And so now if we're waiting the school board
13 where does that leave us with that earlier agreed
14 upon discussion?

15 MS. MULLINS: Our concern and the point of
16 requiring a waiver had more to do with the election
17 process because you don't have a district. You don't
18 have -- the district is the State of Arkansas, so how
19 do you conduct an election? And maybe what I need to
20 say is any portion of that that would involve
21 specific boundaries and having to do with elections,
22 that's the only thing that we're concerned about. We
23 don't want to not require our board to have
24 appropriate training and appropriately composed and
25 have to meet certain requirements as far as

1 understanding their duties. I mean, as it is right
2 now, the folks on our board are business people,
3 occupational therapists, legal. We have a wide
4 variety of folks on there, as do most boards. But,
5 again, our concern was in the election process.

6 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So we can add the school
7 board. Now keep in mind that charters are required
8 to have a board, but most of the statutes in 6-13-601
9 et seq. and 6-14-101 et seq. do, as she stated, apply
10 to school districts and elections and how many
11 members of the board. But the charter laws do have
12 requirements for having a school board. So I have
13 that we are going to add 6-13-601 et seq., with the
14 exception of 6-13-622. It is a constitutional
15 requirement and cannot be waived. And 6-14-101 et.
16 seq., which deals with the school board elections.

17 Okay. That was all.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is that correct, Ms.
19 Mullins?

20 MS. MULLINS: Yes. We'd be in agreement with
21 that.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Clarification from Dr.
23 Saunders.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Go ahead. Go ahead, unless you
25 were done.

1 MS. DAVIS: No.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I'm trying to clarify back
3 on the 6-18-1001, the student services. So I think I
4 got a little confused on that. So am I hearing now
5 that, for example, 6-18-1005 is requested to be
6 waived in its entirety?

7 MS. DAVIS: Can I just offer one clarification?
8 Okay. So 6-18-1001 et seq., along with a standard
9 and a section of the rules governing public school
10 student services, is only needed if you are waiving
11 guidance counseling services or some portion in
12 between. So if they -- so maybe it is more -- if
13 they're only going to waive portions of it, then we
14 will help them figure out which portions that they
15 need if they are not going to be waiving guidance
16 counseling services. So if they're going to provide
17 them, maybe we just need more clarification from the
18 applicant.

19 MS. MULLINS: And we have no intention of not
20 providing the guidance services. So if our -- we
21 don't want to waive guidance services; we just --
22 we're just -- the only concern was the position. And
23 it may be -- I mean, if we have the opportunity to
24 maybe review some of these with Legal and provide
25 more clarification -- at the moment I would have to

1 say based on what is here that we don't wish to waive
2 guidance services; it's just the method that we
3 provide it.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: But that would require a
5 waiver; right, Ms. Davis?

6 MS. DAVIS: Well, I mean, like what method will
7 you be providing it? That's kind of --

8 MS. MULLINS: It will be a counseling service,
9 as opposed to an individual.

10 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So you don't want to hire
11 someone?

12 MS. MULLINS: Right.

13 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So in that instance you are
14 going to need a waiver -- give me one second here and
15 I'll tell you. Bear with me for a second.

16 MR. ROGERS: I guess I just want to say a
17 comment based off yesterday. All the waiver stuff
18 that we're talking about again today is kind of
19 getting me a little concerned. We've changed what we
20 -- what they originally asked for and we've got the
21 testimony also, but we keep going back and forth so
22 much that I can't even take enough notes to know what
23 they've asked for and what they've not asked for.
24 When did we -- when did you start the process of
25 doing the charter application? And I'm not trying to

1 be ugly; just go with me a little bit.

2 MS. MULLINS: The beginning of 2016.

3 MR. ROGERS: Alexandra, how much have they --
4 have they utilized you as much as they possibly could
5 within -- I mean, and I guess I may not have asked
6 that right. Did they just run out of time trying to
7 get it to the Panel today?

8 MS. BOYD: Could you say that one more time?

9 MR. ROGERS: I'm just trying to figure out if
10 all the resources that they had were utilized and
11 they just ran out of time or did they just not know
12 the questions to ask people or the people to ask.
13 Because one of the things I noticed in the testimony
14 today is that she mentioned that she'd been with
15 APSRC and I'm just wondering how involved you were
16 with APSRC, when did you find out about APSRC, when
17 did you start working with Alexandra to try to find
18 out if there's -- if we got more time to try to get
19 clarification on the waivers. Because like I think
20 they said -- I believe the intent is there for this
21 charter; I just don't know if we've got enough
22 clarification --

23 MS. BOYD: Right.

24 MR. ROGERS: -- to know.

25 MS. BOYD: I think -- I think it is a case, for

1 the most part, that perhaps they didn't know what
2 questions to ask, and through our communications
3 together it wasn't clear to me that they probably
4 needed a heightened level of technical assistance. I
5 can't remember anything in detail about APSRC or when
6 I mentioned it. I know that I always mention APSRC
7 and Tripp Walter when I talk about desegregation
8 analysis. But that's the only thing I can tell you
9 for sure. I can't -- I can't recall anything
10 specifically about discussing APSRC with them outside
11 of that.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Mullins, you might
13 want to address that as well.

14 MS. MULLINS: Yes. Our involvement with APSRC
15 has not been as complete as we'd like it to be. We
16 have made attempts early on in the spring and didn't
17 make the connections that we needed to. In recent --
18 in panic mode, we have communicated with Tyler
19 Barnett and the game plan is to be -- to join the
20 membership so that we can proceed with additional
21 guidance with them. If it's a matter of a decision
22 being postponed and us clarifying some of this and
23 getting that guidance and coming back so that we can
24 answer the questions, we'd certainly be willing to do
25 that. This is obviously very important to us. We

1 are not -- we are not Ms. Davis; we don't have a lot
2 of the answers, and we know that APSRC has a lot of
3 those answers for us. And until you're viable with
4 them, some of those are -- that isn't an available
5 resource, that is -- like I said, we have made that
6 connection and we are on track to do that.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis.

8 MS. DAVIS: I just want to clarify for the
9 record, I do not have the answers. But the rules do
10 allow that, if you choose, that you may send this
11 applicant back, table this decision and send them
12 back for modifications and technical assistance and
13 to hear at a later date, should you decide that's
14 what you'd like to do.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions or
16 comments from the Panel?

17 DR. GOTCHER: Not from me.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Then hearing none, I'll
19 accept a motion. Ms. Smith needs time.

20 MS. SMITH: Okay. So since we don't like
21 approvals with contingencies, which I understand -- I
22 mean, I understand that -- but as a board, so if we
23 -- if we approved without contingencies, if we just
24 approved, we do have the authority to call them back
25 in in the spring, prior to them opening, and ask

1 clarifying questions and making sure that -- I mean,
2 some of those things that we're asking -- I mean, I
3 understand as a non-educator basically coming up and
4 trying to apply for an application of a school how
5 some of this is -- I mean, I get that. I think
6 there's a huge difference between what we're seeing
7 today and what we saw yesterday as far as testifying.
8 I think that -- I don't know; I'm pulled. I'm pulled
9 on this. I'm really pulled because I feel like we
10 have some -- a good -- like a good base of people who
11 are ready to do something, but I'm still lacking the
12 answers, so --

13 MS. DAVIS: Right. And I just again want to
14 point out that if you grant a charter then they do go
15 forward with, say, building leases, financial
16 commitments. And then while we can call them back at
17 any time, you have the full intent to call them back
18 in the spring, then there is an impact if they have
19 gone to the point of entering into all these
20 commitments with the assumption that they will have a
21 school if they may not be and you're kind of still
22 putting them in a situation that they may or may not
23 be able to -- you know -- it's kind of still a
24 precarious situation.

25 MS. SMITH: Right. Well, to me the lease

1 agreement was really a non-issue because they have a
2 school; they have a building.

3 MS. DAVIS: Well, but just other things.

4 MS. SMITH: Right. I guess my thing is are you
5 going to be able to get the student enrollment. And,
6 you know, by late spring I would think you would know
7 -- you know, if that would be an active thing I think
8 you'd be working on, that you would know how many you
9 have coming; do you have the one-to-one or two-to-one
10 ratio on technology by that point; have -- you know
11 -- have you secured money from the Waltons to do what
12 you need to do. I mean, I think there are some of
13 those decisions that could not be made unless we
14 voted yes today. I don't think she could go forward
15 and do some of the things that she would need to do
16 to answer the questions I have. I mean, that's my
17 problem is if I say no today they have no way --

18 MR. ROGERS: But I would say saying yes today
19 and then bringing them back at a later day is just
20 like having a contingency because then --

21 MS. SMITH: See, that was my work-around for
22 Annette.

23 MR. ROGERS: But then -- because if we are going
24 to bring them back up at a later date, then it's the
25 same issues because when they go out to the parents

1 or go out to get the transportation or whatever,
2 they've got to have contracts to work, knowing full
3 well they've got to come back before the Board again
4 in the spring. That's just like a contingency too
5 because then the parents are saying, "Well, I don't
6 know if we can" -- I mean, "I'll wait till after the
7 spring and see if they renew your charter." And so
8 that would be -- so I don't know, Scott, if APSRC,
9 how they --

10 MS. DAVIS: They did make a commitment that if
11 the applicant was interested in their services that
12 they could assist.

13 MR. ROGERS: So that means --

14 MR. SMITH: And I apologize; I haven't been here
15 the entire hearing. Scott Smith with APSRC. So from
16 what I understand from Mr. Barnett, we got the phone
17 call yesterday, so we have not -- obviously, there
18 were some capacity issues with the application is why
19 we had not -- I think the concept is a very
20 interesting concept. As I understand it, Dr.
21 Kimbrell is onboard for various reasons. And we
22 would be willing to sit down and visit with them and
23 see if we could provide some technical assistance, if
24 the Board wanted to take this matter under
25 advisement, and then see -- but our only concern, I

1 guess, is I think you're obligated to address the
2 application that's before you and it can't be
3 rewritten at this point and stage. And so I don't
4 know how much leeway we might have, but we would be
5 willing to try and assist. I think this issue is
6 very similar to the one that you looked at yesterday.
7 We would hope maybe to see it come back up pretty
8 soon also for more technical assistance in some ways.
9 So if there's some way we could be beneficial, we're
10 happy to do that.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Mr. Smith, did you say that your
12 first contact with them was yesterday?

13 MR. SMITH: Not the first contact. I think what
14 I heard is that we'd been contacted in the last
15 several days, and Mr. Barnett just indicated that we
16 received the phone call yesterday. I think there was
17 an initial contact way early in the process --

18 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

19 MR. SMITH: -- if I understand correct.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Thank you.

21 MS. PFEFFER: As I've listened today, I can
22 think of three communities with just in a few miles
23 of my hometown, Dellaplaine, Biggers, Reyno, and Oak
24 Ridge Central; all lost their school districts. Some
25 of that happened while I was in high school, some in

1 the subsequent years, and so I had many conversations
2 prior to my coming here with communities that have
3 lost their schools. And as I listen to you, I have
4 no doubt that your community is committed and I want
5 to say yes. My concern is with today's application.
6 I honestly don't know what I would be approving for
7 sure; I have doubts, I have questions, and that's
8 what has caused me concern. And so I would like to
9 see there be an opportunity for technical assistance
10 and coming back, because I think some of the things
11 that weren't clear today are just a lack of
12 understanding of the law and what waivers to request.
13 And to be honest, when I look at those lists of
14 waivers and I go through and I try to read and
15 understand, it is a daunting task. And without legal
16 assistance I think it's very, very difficult to put
17 together an application that has the right waivers
18 that match your intent and your ability to move
19 forward as a school district. The number of teachers
20 and the class sizes and the budget, you know, that's
21 another thing, and I realize you've made some
22 modifications today. But, again, that's all based on
23 a budget where you've projected your revenue at 60
24 students. So those are just the lingering concerns I
25 have.

1 So I would like to -- and I know this didn't
2 work prior, but I would like to make a motion that we
3 table this. And if it's the appropriate motion --
4 and they may have to help me out -- my intent would
5 be for them to be able to get some technical
6 assistance and come back with the application. So
7 that would be my motion, if that's appropriate.

8 MS. DAVIS: Okay. My recommendation is that if
9 you have them come back that you do so in the October
10 meeting because they would not really have that much
11 time in order to get it back in time for September.

12 MS. PFEFFER: And I feel like that the
13 application -- really, for me, the concerns hinge on
14 the waivers.

15 MS. DAVIS: Right.

16 MS. PFEFFER: And so I think if they had the
17 technical assistance with someone -- with -- if they
18 had the legal technical assistance I think that then
19 they could bring back a stronger application and one
20 where we would not have these questions. But that
21 would -- that's my motion.

22 MS. SMITH: So I second.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We have a motion and a
24 second to table for technical assistance. So time
25 for discussion.

1 MR. ROGERS: So in the motion was it to bring --
2 to come back in October?

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes.

4 MR. ROGERS: Okay. That's the only question I
5 have.

6 MS. BARNES: So my question, given the motion
7 and second to table, come back in October; then in
8 October would this mean that this applicant would be
9 returning to secure approval to start up in the 17-18
10 school year, and would that be in time for them to
11 take care of all of the necessary pieces to start up?
12 I guess I'm asking both Legal and the Charter Office
13 since it's coming in October.

14 MS. DAVIS: It could take theoretically until
15 December by the time it goes through State Board
16 approval, and that would be up to the applicant as
17 far as whether or not they would want to continue and
18 if that would be enough time for them to continue
19 with the school year for 17-18 or if they want to at
20 that time push it back. And keep in mind that when
21 they would be coming back in October it would only be
22 to address the information that had been corrected or
23 received as a result of technical assistance. It
24 would be the new stuff; it wouldn't necessarily be
25 the full hearing.

1 MS. BARNES: That was my concern.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: I just want to express my concern
4 with this in that I think that there are many issues
5 still unresolved. I know that technical assistance
6 will be sought and gone forth; however, at the same
7 time I would want that done quickly. I think it is a
8 very careful process and I think there's a lot of
9 work to be done and lots of back-and-forth that I do
10 not see it as getting to that point by October. And
11 so I think for that reason I would be opposed. I
12 think it's -- I think they have a great initiative; I
13 think they have great passion and everything else,
14 but I think that the amount of time that it would
15 take to build the application to the quality that it
16 needs to be would be beyond that deadline.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd.

18 MS. BOYD: As a note, October -- being heard in
19 the October hearing means that I would need all their
20 written responses at the latest by October 6th, just
21 a little over a month.

22 DR. GOTCHER: Madam Chair?

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes.

24 DR. GOTCHER: And to Dr. Saunders' point, that
25 was a similar comment I was going to make. While I

1 support the idea, support the initiative, feel like
2 they have some distinctiveness that would bring some
3 benefit to the kids of that community, I would hope
4 that the next application or the next presentation
5 would have the process of much time to be able to
6 bring a more quality application. So I don't think
7 October, just from what I'm understanding with the
8 support that both entities -- the Charter Office as
9 well as APSRC -- I don't think October allows for
10 enough time. So I would hope for much longer time
11 than that. I'm not sure what the calendar would be
12 for that. Anyway, we've got a motion on the floor
13 currently; right?

14 MS. BARNES: And a second.

15 DR. GOTCHER: And a second.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional discussion?
17 Then I'll take a roll-call vote. The motion is to
18 table for technical assistance and to hear the
19 revisions in October. Ms. Liwo.

20 MS. LIWO: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

22 MR. LESTER: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

24 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: No.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

3 MS. BARNES: No.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

5 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

7 MS. SMITH: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

9 DR. GOTCHER: No.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: One, two, three, four,
11 five to three. Motion fails.

12 Do I have another motion?

13 DR. GOTCHER: I think with the -- yes. Comment
14 first?

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, sure.

16 DR. GOTCHER: With all the discussion that is
17 taking place and recognizing the time that's needed,
18 I think a simple motion would be just to simply deny
19 the application at this time. And then the next
20 application cycle, would that be at this time next
21 year?

22 MS. DAVIS: (Nodding head up and down.)

23 DR. GOTCHER: Okay. That will be my motion that
24 we deny the applicant -- application that has been
25 presented today.

1 MS. BARNES: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion has been made by
3 Dr. Gotcher and a second by Ms. Barnes to deny the
4 application. Any discussion?

5 DR. GOTCHER: And just the encouragement that I
6 would give is just make total use of APSRC as well as
7 our Charter Office, because I think with their
8 support at this time next year you're going to have a
9 quality application with the best interest for kids
10 for the 18-19 school year.

11 MS. MULLINS: Thank you for your consideration.

12 DR. GOTCHER: Yes, ma'am.

13 MS. SMITH: So just discussion, I mean, I don't
14 think this charter faces some of the same problems
15 that other charters face in the fact that they do
16 have a building, they do have a school system, they
17 do have basically a board already established, they
18 do have outside partners who have already come in. I
19 don't think they face the same challenges that other
20 charters that come before our board, and I still
21 would like to see the fact that they be given the
22 opportunity to get more direct technical assistance
23 and given -- because if we say no today, they come
24 back in the fall, it's still another year; you're
25 looking at two years. I think -- and I'm not

1 surprised to hear that Dr. Kimbrell is for this. I
2 know of overcrowding issues in Bryant. I know of the
3 busing and the length of time students are on buses
4 coming from the Paron district into -- so, I mean, I
5 just -- to give them no opportunity to come for
6 technical assistance for this year and just the
7 challenges that they face I think would be possibly
8 unfair.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other discussion? The
10 motion is to deny the application. Ms. Liwo.

11 MS. LIWO: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. -- Mr. Lester.

13 MR. LESTER: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

15 MR. ROGERS: No.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

19 MS. BARNES: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

21 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

23 MS. SMITH: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

25 DR. GOTCHER: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Six-to-two, motion
2 carries.

3 If you'll take a moment to type in your
4 responses.

5 Ms. Mullins, in our process we will write a
6 written response as to why the panel members voted
7 that way. That document will be read aloud here in
8 just a moment and then it will be submitted as a part
9 of evidence into the State Board meeting for next
10 month.

11 MS. MULLINS: Is there -- I can speak to Ms.
12 Davis. Is there a method of requesting of the Board
13 a re-hearing prior to the end of the year?

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes. At the Board -- at
15 the State Board meeting, the Board will review all of
16 the documents and they will make a motion to review
17 or not review at the next State Board meeting. And
18 then if they vote to review, then at the following
19 month they would have a hearing -- a hearing would
20 occur and their decision is final.

21 MS. MULLINS: Okay. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: You're welcome.

23 Ms. Barnes.

24 MS. BARNES: Yes. I voted for the motion to
25 deny the application at this time. While I

1 understand the passion and desire to restore
2 educational opportunities in the community, many
3 concerns remain unresolved. I share concerns
4 expressed by my colleagues regarding sustainability,
5 educational success, and critical components to the
6 start-up of a charter. At this time too many
7 responses are dependent upon "may," "we hope," et
8 cetera. And so I am unable to support approval
9 today.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

11 DR. GOTCHER: I also voted for the denial for
12 the application at this time. I feel there is strong
13 community support and the potential for a viable
14 academic program for the students. But much time is
15 needed for a more quality application to be
16 submitted.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

18 MR. LESTER: I voted for the denial. It is
19 obvious that the Paron community has a passion for
20 providing an educational setting for their children.
21 However, at this time, today, I am concerned about
22 the initial start-up, the operations, capacity, and
23 sustainability for educational success.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

25 MS. PFEFFER: My heart tells me I want to say

1 yes, but my head tells me that the charter is not yet
2 ready based on the application presented today.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

4 MR. ROGERS: I voted no. While I do agree that
5 there are plenty of questions that still need to be
6 answered, I would've liked to have seen the charter
7 have the opportunity to get the technical help they
8 need. And I hope they will work to improve the
9 application and bring it back next year.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: I voted in favor. I thought this
12 would allow time to produce greater quality in the
13 application and strengthen your position.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

15 MS. SMITH: I voted against. I believe
16 additional technical assistance would've allowed the
17 charter to have an approved application. This
18 would've allowed almost a year for the charter to
19 plan and implement.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

21 MS. LIWO: I voted in favor of denying the
22 application. I do believe that the Paron community
23 needs an alternative. I do see the passion and the
24 heart. But just reviewing the application and
25 hearing everything that's been said today, I didn't

1 -- I wasn't convinced that if we did grant the
2 application that the charter would -- could be
3 sustained.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Thank you,
5 Panel.

6 Ms. McMullins -- Mullins, we appreciate your
7 presentation today and strongly encourage you to
8 begin technical assistance now.

9 MS. MULLINS: Oh, trust me, this is just one
10 more step.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We understand. Thank you
12 so much.

13 A-2: REQUEST FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENTS:
14 FUTURE SCHOOL OF FORT SMITH

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, moving on to
16 action item 2, I understand that that item has been
17 pulled from the agenda?

18 MS. BOYD: That's correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So we'll take a break and
20 come back ready for action item number 3.

21 MS. BOYD: All right. Thank you.

22 (BREAK: 10:52 - 11:07 A.M.)

23 A-3: REQUEST FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENTS:
24 OZARK MONTESSORI ACADEMY

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. McLaughlin, you are

1 recognized for action item number 3.

2 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Today
3 we have Ozark Montessori Academy here for a request
4 for their open-enrollment charter school. Would you
5 like to be reminded of the rules by Ms. Davis?

6 MS. DAVIS: The procedures you're going to
7 follow are going to be the same that you just
8 followed. The applicant is going to have 20 minutes
9 to present their argument to you for their amendment,
10 followed by 20 minutes for opposition, and then 5
11 minutes for the applicant to rebut any statements
12 that were made. Everything that is wishing to
13 provide testimony will need to be sworn in, with the
14 exception of attorneys. And anything that is said
15 today by the applicant that differs or is that agreed
16 to that differs from what's in your written document
17 does become part of any amendment that you grant.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If all representatives
19 from Ozark Montessori Academy and anyone speaking in
20 opposition would please stand, raise your right hand
21 to receive the oath. Do you swear or affirm that the
22 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,
23 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

24 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. McLaughlin, do you

1 have any additional words before we begin?

2 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No. Just Dr. Silano is here to
3 present.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Silano, if
5 you'll give your full name and title for the record,
6 then you'll have 20 minutes.

7 DR. SILANO: Hi. I'm Dr. Christine Silano; I'm
8 the executive director of Ozark Education,
9 Incorporated, and the principal of Ozark Montessori
10 Academy and the founder. And I'm here today for
11 request of a waiver for class sizes. I don't expect
12 this presentation to take 20 minutes.

13 As a Montessori school, Montessori model of
14 instruction, we adhere to mixed age classrooms. And
15 what we ran into is in our first through third grade
16 mixed age classroom there's a little bit of a
17 difference between class sizes for first and second
18 graders and third graders. In April of 2016, I was
19 informed by the ADE Standards of Accreditation office
20 that two of our mixed age classrooms and several of
21 our specials classrooms were overloaded. We did not
22 originally request a class size waiver in our charter
23 due to faulty assumptions on my part due to not
24 understanding the rules. For one, I wrongly assumed
25 that class sizes could be averaged. So we ask for 27

1 students in our first through third grade classrooms.
2 We had two of those classrooms and so I thought of it
3 in terms of averages. I also thought in terms of the
4 fact that we have two adults in every classroom: a
5 lead teacher and an assistant teacher. So I really
6 thought we were in good shape. What I didn't realize
7 about the rules was that the assistant teacher also
8 needs to be a teacher of record. And so those
9 assistants, although they're excellent, they all
10 carry their bachelor's degrees, they were not
11 teachers of record nor are they paid as teachers, the
12 same amount as our teachers of record. So, let's
13 see; was there anything else?

14 Currently, we are in compliance. We did not
15 fully enroll as we would've liked to in those
16 classrooms, as we're waiting for your decision on the
17 waiver. We do have several families who are anxious
18 to hear the outcome of this meeting who are on our
19 waiting list. But we do have the requisite average
20 -- I think it's an average of 23 students to a
21 classroom with a maximum of not more than 25. We did
22 find that due to the physical space differences in
23 our different classroom areas -- we're in an older
24 renovated church and some of our classrooms are
25 bigger than others. So we have self-elected to lower

1 some of the class sizes, but we would like the option
2 to, with the bigger classrooms, to be able to have 27
3 with the two teachers in the room and then the
4 smaller classes will be as low as 22 to a classroom.
5 In our waiver we would like the option to be able to
6 go up to 30 in any given classroom, including our
7 kindergarten. And the reason for that is I foresee a
8 potential problem in years coming. As Mrs. Coffman
9 is aware, and I think Dr. Gotcher is aware, our goal
10 is to be able to have the mixed age primary which is
11 part of the Montessori model which is where you mix
12 ages 3 to 6. Right now, we just have straight
13 kindergarten which is not really Montessori. So we
14 have -- our kindergarten classrooms right now are at
15 15, and we've purposefully kept them small in
16 anticipation of adding preschoolers down the road.
17 We've had to keep the classes small because we don't
18 want too many 1st graders, you know. So it's been
19 nice for those teachers and those classes to have
20 those small classes, but they really want their
21 three- and four-year olds. And so in the Montessori
22 model, Dr. Montessori recommended class sizes of 35,
23 actually. She said to get the dynamics, the social
24 dynamics you need to encourage children to be able to
25 interact socially the way they need to; you need the

1 bigger group. The smaller the groups, then you have
2 less choices socially; children can't work with --
3 you know, in their independent plans with -- or you
4 need them to be able to work with -- in both
5 heterogeneous and homogeneous mixed groups, and so
6 you need enough students to be able to do that. And
7 you also need the advantages of the younger learning
8 from the older and the older from the younger. So
9 it's not all about small class sizes in Montessori;
10 it's about having lots of opportunities for different
11 configurations. And so for those reasons we would
12 like the classroom size waiver, and I'm open to
13 questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is there anyone here to
15 speak in opposition?

16 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No, ma'am.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Any additional
18 comments before we begin questions?

19 DR. SILANO: Can't think of any.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Silano.
21 Ms. Smith.

22 MS. SMITH: So in the kindergarten, the 30, how
23 many adults are in the room?

24 DR. SILANO: Two.

25 MS. SMITH: There are two adults for the 30

1 kindergarten students, and one is the lead teacher
2 and one is more like an aid or --

3 DR. SILANO: Right. As I said, they wouldn't be
4 all kindergarten; they would be ages 3 to 6. Right
5 now, we've been working with the Department and the
6 DHS to be able to achieve that goal, to be able to
7 mix those students. There are problems that we need
8 to address, including, you know, how to fund, the
9 funding arrangements; so mixing federal and state
10 funds is an obstacle. What was the other -- oh, the
11 lottery is going to be an obstacle, which I'm sure
12 I'll be coming back to you to talk about. There is a
13 federal law that allows -- that says that, you know,
14 federally, it's okay for charter schools to hold a
15 lottery for the 3-year olds. And so, you know, if
16 Arkansas could adopt that -- and that may take some
17 -- help me out here -- legislative action to make
18 that happen. But this is something that
19 Montessorians across the country deal with; different
20 states have found solutions. And so we'll be working
21 with the different agencies to try to come up with a
22 solution. Our Montessori accreditation is contingent
23 on it. So, right now, I have a kindergarten teacher
24 who cannot be certified because we don't have a mixed
25 age Montessori classroom. And so she's concerned

1 that she's gone through the training, she's doing her
2 practicum now. Will she be able to get certified and
3 will we be able to be accredited by the American
4 Montessori Society? It's not going to happen until
5 we find a solution to this issue. So we're just
6 keeping that space open right now. Those
7 kindergartners have two teachers in the room with
8 only 15 kids. But we would like when the time comes
9 to be able to have up to 30 students in those
10 classrooms, depending on the space available in each
11 classroom.

12 MS. SMITH: Okay. So let me make sure I
13 understood. You wanted in grades 1 through 3 the cap
14 of 27 or the cap of 30?

15 DR. SILANO: Well, I would like 30 across the
16 school just because, as I said, if I have a larger
17 classroom I might put 30 in that classroom: 10 1st,
18 10 2nd, 10 3rd. If I have a smaller classroom, I
19 might do nines. So I would just like that
20 flexibility.

21 MS. SMITH: Okay. And does your application for
22 a charter school include pre-K?

23 DR. SILANO: Oh, no. No.

24 MS. SMITH: Separate group then. So the charter
25 school then is K --

1 DR. SILANO: Right now, we have a preschool on a
2 different campus. It's DHS licensed.

3 MS. SMITH: Okay.

4 DR. SILANO: And our preschoolers had to enroll
5 in the lottery when they were 5-years old just like
6 everybody else. So maybe a third of them have been
7 able to get into our kindergarten.

8 MS. SMITH: Okay.

9 DR. SILANO: So it's a problem because
10 Montessori education starts at toddlerhood and goes
11 up. So our students -- most of our students are not
12 getting the benefit of that preschool component at
13 this time.

14 MS. SMITH: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And just for
16 clarification, even with the class size increase to
17 30 for kindergarten the students would not be mixed
18 until all of those legal issues are resolved?

19 DR. SILANO: Absolutely.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: So in every classroom, even the
22 ones that are currently size 15, there is a teacher
23 and an aid?

24 DR. SILANO: Yes. That's pretty critical for
25 Montessori because the instruction is one-on-one and

1 small group. The teacher is very focused on one
2 child, so you always need another adult, pair of
3 eyes, in the room to supervise.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: So you will always have the
5 teacher and an aid in every classroom?

6 DR. SILANO: Absolutely. Yes.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: Motion at the proper time.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

9 DR. GOTCHER: Yeah. Before the motion, you
10 mentioned that all of the instructional aids have
11 bachelor's degrees?

12 DR. SILANO: Yes.

13 DR. GOTCHER: Is that just --

14 DR. SILANO: No, I take that back. I've got to
15 take that back. I'm sorry.

16 DR. GOTCHER: That's okay.

17 DR. SILANO: In the grade levels that we were in
18 trouble for, yes. We have had a couple of assistants
19 who do not have a bachelor's; they have a high school
20 degree, but bilingual, lots of other assets that have
21 been, you know, an asset to our school.

22 DR. GOTCHER: Sure. I was just simply curious
23 if that was part of the Montessori methodology in
24 terms of what your standards require. So I was just
25 curious. That didn't --

1 DR. SILANO: Well, -- well, yeah, that's a good
2 question because with the American Montessori
3 certification they do have to have a bachelor's
4 before they can enter training. So as we recruit
5 assistants we're creating a pipeline of teachers and
6 so we look for assistants who are qualified for the
7 Montessori training.

8 DR. GOTCHER: Interesting model, isn't it, Ms.
9 Pfeffer?

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Silano, you might just
11 briefly give them kind of a lowdown of what the
12 requirements are for certification in Montessori.
13 There's a -- it's an extensive training.

14 DR. SILANO: It is. They have to attend --
15 depending on what grade level they're teaching, they
16 attend seven or eight weeks, summer, intensive
17 training. So we believe it's the equivalent to a
18 master's degree. They -- because we do not have an
19 accredited teacher training program here in Arkansas,
20 our teachers have had to go out-of-state. I had one
21 who just spent her summer in Boulder with her three
22 children and her nanny. And then they come back and
23 then they have a practicum experience that is
24 supervised by a Montessorian from the training
25 center. So those supervisors come to our campus

1 three times during the year. Also, our teachers have
2 to go back to their training center twice during the
3 year. So they have five visits during the year as
4 follow-up to their training to make sure that they're
5 implementing correctly. That's for kindergarten and
6 lower elementary, up to third grade. Once you get
7 into the higher grades, four through six, they have
8 to do two summers because the AMS requires them to
9 have the lower elementary certification before they
10 can get the upper elementary certification. And the
11 beauty of that is when so many of our kids need to be
12 remediated they also understand the lower grade
13 curriculum, you know, so -- yeah, it's quite
14 extensive and we're hoping too that eventually the
15 State will in some way, shape or form recognize that
16 extensive training as an alternative path to
17 licensure. Because for our teachers to go through
18 all the rigor of that and then have to start over
19 again with an ALP program is just more than I feel,
20 you know, we should have to ask them, so --

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

22 MS. PFEFFER: And I will just tell you that we
23 do have a process for alternative certification
24 proposals, and so that's something I can visit with
25 you about.

1 DR. SILANO: Okay. Great.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Are there any other
3 questions before I ask Ms. Davis to come back?

4 Ms. Davis, if you will address any issues
5 regarding the amendment.

6 MS. DAVIS: There is one issue. They requested
7 a waiver of Section 10.02.3 of the rules, which was
8 -- I mean, of the Standards for Accreditation, which
9 only addresses their waiver for grades 1 through 3.
10 If they are in fact wanting a waiver for
11 kindergarten, they'll need also a waiver of Section
12 10.02.2. And if they want a waiver for grades 4 to
13 6, they will need a waiver of 10.02.4.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Silano, your response?

15 DR. SILANO: Is 4 to 6, what is the cap for 4 to
16 6? I thought it was 30. Is it not?

17 MS. DAVIS: No, I think it's like 25 and then
18 maximum of 28.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: 28, Ms. Barnes says.

20 DR. SILANO: Well, I would like to add those
21 additional waiver requests today.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: For the cap of 30?

23 DR. SILANO: For the cap of 30 for all the grade
24 levels.

25 MS. DAVIS: That was the only issue I had.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. McLaughlin, do you
2 have any additional comments?

3 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No, I do not.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional
5 conversation from the Panel?

6 Then I'll accept a motion.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: I would like to make a motion to
8 accept the amendment.

9 DR. GOTCHER: Second.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion has been made by
11 Dr. Saunders and a second by Dr. Gotcher to accept
12 the amendment. Any discussion?

13 Then I'll do a roll-call. Ms. Liwo.

14 MS. LIWO: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

16 MR. LESTER: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

18 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

22 MS. BARNES: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

24 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

1 MS. SMITH: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

3 DR. GOTCHER: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Unanimous decision.

5 DR. SILANO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If you'll wait just a
7 moment, we'll give you our written responses. And,
8 Dr. Silano, just to remind you, this will go to the
9 State Board for review.

10 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

12 DR. GOTCHER: Voted for the amendment, to
13 approve the amendment request. My reason: there are
14 no concerns with this amendment that impact student
15 achievement.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

17 MR. LESTER: I voted for the amendment. I have
18 no concerns with the amendment as far as -- it also
19 aligns with the Montessori model.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

21 MS. LIWO: I voted for. I didn't have any
22 concerns with the request.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

24 MS. PFEFFER: I voted for the motion. I have no
25 concerns with the amendment.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

2 MR. ROGERS: I voted for. No concerns.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: I voted for. I believe it allows
5 the flexibility to follow the Montessori model with
6 the assurance of an aid in every classroom.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

8 MS. SMITH: I voted for. No concerns regarding
9 the waiver amendment.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

11 MS. BARNES: I voted for. I have no concerns
12 regarding this amendment. It appears to be necessary
13 to maintain integrity of process and operation in the
14 Montessori model.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Congratulations.

16 I would encourage you, if you have a moment, to
17 speak to Ms. Smith about the training that grades 4
18 through 6 go through because it's very interesting to
19 build a solid reading and math program if those grade
20 level teachers have the foundational skills necessary
21 to intervene appropriately and efficiently to move
22 the kids to grade level and beyond. So it's really a
23 model, I think, should be studied across the state.

24 DR. SILANO: Okay. I'd love to.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Very interesting.

1 DR. SILANO: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, Ms. McLaughlin,
3 do you have any additional issues before the Panel
4 today?

5 MS. BOYD: No, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders, did you have
7 a comment for Ms. Boyd?

8 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah, I did for Ms. Boyd and
9 Legal. Is there some possible way, looking at on the
10 waiver request applications, that when the waiver --
11 I think when the section of code is stated can we
12 require the title of that section of code as well?

13 MS. BOYD: Yes. I can -- I believe it's on the
14 form that we have them complete, but I can make it so
15 they have to do it before they move on.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. That was all I have.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We're just trying to clear
18 up our own confusions a little quicker.

19 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional
21 conversation or information before the Panel today?
22 If not, I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

23 DR. SAUNDERS: So moved.

24 MR. ROGERS: Second.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion has been made and

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seconded to adjourn. All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you all and have a great day.

(The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.)

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A-1:
EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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